

History of Dogri Literature

SHIVANATH



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NEW DELHI

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HISTORY OF DOGRI LITERATURE

by
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Preface

I HAVE been associated with Dogri literature as a reader and an observer for over 30 years. During this period, I have written a few articles to introduce Dogri literature to English-knowing readers. The first of these on "Dogri Folk Literature" was published in the November-December 1959 issue of *Kashmir Affairs*, published from Delhi. This was followed by an essay on "Contemporary Dogri Writing", carried by *Quest* in its July-September 1972 issue. Then I contributed an article on "Dogri Poetry Today" to the April 1965 issue of *Cultural Forum*, a magazine brought out by the Ministry of Education, Government of India. *Indian Writing Today* published "A Brief Survey on Dogri Language and Literature" in its third issue towards the end of 1960's. This survey was later brought out in the shape of a brochure by the Dogri Samstha, Jammu, on the occasion of Dogri Recognition Day, i.e., 10 September 1969—the day Dogri was recognised as an independent literary language of India by the Sahitya Akademi. *Indian Literature*, the quarterly journal of the Sahitya Akademi, has also carried my contributions in some of its issues after 1972.

The inspiration for this exercise in writing a history of Dogri literature came from Prof. Ram Nath Shastri, Secretary

of the Dogri Samstha, Jammu, during my visit to Jammu to read a paper on "Dogri Poetry", in the first Dogri Writers' Conference in 1967. It took me about three years to complete the first manuscript covering the period upto 1970. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, President of the Sahitya Akademi, was kind enough to go through this manuscript and commend its early publication. When the Advisory Board for Dogri decided to publish a history of Dogri literature at its first meeting, the manuscript was unanimously recommended for publication. The manuscript has been brought upto date to cover the period upto December 1974. Activities in the field of Dogri literature after that date have not, therefore, been covered.

I am grateful to Prof. Ram Nath Shastri and Shri Ram Lal Sharma of the Dogri Samstha, Jammu, for making available to me, from time to time, information about Dogri publications and the publications themselves; to the Members of the Dogri Advisory Board, Shri Neelambar Dev Sharma, Shri Anant Ram Shastri and Dr. Ved Kumari Ghai who read the manuscript, for their valuable suggestions and to Dr. Ved Kumari Ghai for providing diacritical marks in the manuscript.

New Delhi
1 January 1976

SHIVANATH

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

DOGRAS are well known for their valour on the battlefield and for their famous schools of Pahari painting, but not much is known to the world outside about their homeland Duggar, their language Dogri and their literature.

DUGGAR

The part of India, which is inhabited by Dogras and where Dogri and allied dialects are spoken, is called Duggar. It is not, however, shown as such in the maps of India or known as such in history books. The word 'Duggar' or 'Dogra' does not occur in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, the earliest work on the history of Kashmir and the adjoining regions. It finds no mention in old coins, inscriptions, travelogues or even the literature of earlier times. The earliest mention of 'Durgar' occurs in Chamba copperplates of the 11th century A.D. and it refers to a community inhabiting the region between the Ravi and the Chenab, the traditional home of Dogras. 'Durgar' appears to have changed in course of time and by the 19th century when the British came to these parts, the entire mountainous and sub-mountainous region between the Sutlej and the Chenab was called 'Duggar' and its inhabitants 'Dogras'. It appears that between the 10th century and the 19th century, Dogras spread their influence over the

whole area and the epithet which meant 'invincible', reflecting the martial image of the community in the chronicles of history, came to be adopted by all the people of this region. The region was demarcated in the following two sub-regions for the purposes of recruitment of Dogras to the Army:

The eastern, comprising the districts of Kangra, Hoshiarpur and Gurdaspur and the former States of Suket, Mandi and Bilaspur with the Ravi to the west, Dhauladhar and the higher Himalayas in the north, the Sutlej to the east and a line drawn from Rupar through Hoshiarpur to Gurdaspur in the south; and the western, consisting of the former province of Jammu and the State of Chamba and part of Sialkot and Gurdaspur districts to the west of the Ravi, with Manawar Tawi to the west, Pirpanjal on the north and a line drawn from Gurdaspur to Sialkot in the south.

According to Prof. Gauri Shankar, three terrains form the Dogra land, the *Pahār* (high mountains), *Kandī* (lower hills) and the plains at the foot of the Siwalik. The mountainous area is dry and barren at some places, and green at others, with rivers, lakes and meadows in between; Udhampur, Riāsi, Rāmnagar, Rāmban, Chambā, Dharam-sālā, Kudh and Kullu are some of the better known towns in this area. The landscape of Kandi is composed of craggy hills, rugged rocks, low hillocks and characterised by wells, *baolis*, *dhakkis* and general water scarcity; Kangra, Basohli Nurpur, Sāmbā, Jammu, Akhnoor are some of the towns of Kandi. At the foot of the Siwalik hills lie the plains of Duggar—fertile with rivers and canals; Andarwah, Bajwat, Ranbir Singhpora, Gurdaspur, Pathankot, Hoshiarpur are the towns of the plains.

DOGRAS

Although the people of all the three terrains have the background and tradition of a common culture and a common set of values, they have different characteristics and varying modes of living. The people of the mountains are comparatively simple, hospitable, freedom-loving, happy in the lap of

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nature and generally content with their way of living. The people of the plains are less simple and less straightforward and more worldlywise and clever and their pattern of living is influenced by the neighbouring Punjabi way of life. People of Kandi are the salt of Duggar, typical Dogras, hardworking, self-respecting, ready to die for the honour of their women and for the sake of their caste and country and prepared to break rather than bend. Kandi area, suitable for guerilla type of warfare has produced great Dogra soldiers and generals. This area, isolated for long periods from the political cross-currents of the plains and abounding in the beauty of nature has also harboured great schools of Indian painting—at Basohli, Kangra, Poonch, Guler and Jammu.

Dogra, like the people of other communities of the North-West frontier of India, Kashmiris and Punjabis, belong to the Aryan stock. They have well-chiselled features, clear and arched eye-brows, straight fine nose, narrow nostrils, a certain rustic and unsophisticated look, are medium in height and simple in temperament. They have respect for human goodness and express a strong feeling of family pride and personal honour. They are brave, courageous, fearless and capable of bearing great hardships; generally truthful, obedient and tradition-bound, they are sometimes not quite sharp in intelligence, being rather dull and quick to take offence. Because of their qualities of character, they are considered as ideal soldiers—military service being a respectable profession in Duggar.

People professing different kinds of faiths live in Duggar. There are Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians. But the majority of the inhabitants consists of Hindus, who are divided into innumerable castes and subcastes. Duggar having been secluded from the rest of the country for a considerable number of years, could be said to have remained backward and tradition-bound, conditioned by Pauranic Hinduism; the evils of untouchability, ritualism and casteism have continued to be practised. After national independence there has been a

gradual loosening of the rigid caste-structure in the cities and the towns of Duggar and a thaw is slowly spreading out to suburban and rural areas. In 1901, Dogras numbered about 25 lakhs. Today their numbers would be approximately 50 lakhs.

DOGRI

Dogri is like a quilt made up of many patches, a mosaic of dialects. As spoken today, it has been shaped over a course of centuries by many historical factors and contains many remnants of history preserved carefully in the hills and valleys of Duggar. There are traces of the old dialects of Sanskrit and of languages spoken by Khasas, Yavanas, Takkas, Gurjars, Turks and Moguls, who came to India in successive waves and left their marks on the pattern of the life and speech of the local people.

The earliest mention of Duggar Bhasha is found in A.D. 1317 in an enumeration of Indian Languages made by Amir Khusro. In this list Duggar Bhasha has been mentioned right after a reference to the language spoken in Delhi. Then, in the beginning of the 19th century, in A.D. 1816 to be exact, Rev. Carey made a mention of Dogri in his list of Indian languages. In 1867, the founder of modern Indo-Aryan linguistics, John Beams, described Dogri as one of the 11 languages of the Aryan branch of Indo-German linguistic family in his essay entitled 'Outlines of Indian Philology'. These 11 languages were Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Sindhi, Marathi, Gujarati, Nepali, Oriya, Assamese, Kashmiri and Dogra. The area of Dogra Bhasha and its sub-dialects was defined by him as the hill area lying between the Punjab and the valley of Kashmir. This Bhāshā or language had a script of its own called Tākārī, a direct descendant of the Tākārī script current in the Punjab, Duggar and Kashmir in the 10th century which later gave birth to the Shārdā script of Kashmiri and the Gurmukhi script of Punjabi.

The Linguistic Survey of India by Grierson has listed the following dialects spoken in the area of Duggar:

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- (i) **DOGRI:** Spoken in Jammu and the area around it, extending to Zafarwal tehsil of Sialkot (116 villages of it), Bajwat and lower hills and adjoining plains of Gurdaspur district and in some portion of former Chambā State.
- (ii) **KANDYALI:** Spoken in the hilly area, north-east of Gurdaspur and in the area of Shāhpur Kandi.
- (iii) **KANGRI:** Speech of Kangra which is a mixture of Dogri, Punjabi and Pahāri, with a sprinkling of Kashmiri. This is written in Tākari script of Chambā.
- (iv) **BHATIALI:** Spoken in the western part of Chambā adjoining the State of Jammu and Kashmir. This is also written in Tākari, like Dogri.
- (v) **SIRMAURI:** Speech of Sirmaur and Jubbal. Its script is also a form of Tākari.
- (vi) **BAGHATI:** The dialect spoken in Baghat and to the south-west of Simla. It is very much like Sirmauri.
- (vii) **KIUNTHALI:** The dialect spoken in Kiunthal and around Simla.
- (viii) **KULLUI:** The dialect spoken in Kullu.
- (ix) **MANDYALI:** The dialect spoken in Mandi and Suket. This is nearer to Kāngri than to Western Pahāri. Its script is also of a type of Tākari.
- (x) **CHAMEALI:** The speech of Chamba which is made up of an admixture of Bhadrawāhi, Kullui and Dogri of Jammu. It has got four sub-dialects—(i) standard Chambeali which is spoken in Chamba Wazarat, (ii) Bharmauri or Gaddi which is current in the Bharmaur Wazarat, (iii) Churachi which is spoken in Churah Wazarat and (iv) Pangwali which is spoken in Pangi Valley. Pangwali looks quite different from Chameali.
- (xi) **KALHURI:** The speech current in the hills of north-east Hoshiarpur and in Bilaspur, Kalhur and Mangal. This is also known as Bilaspuri.

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- (xii) **BHADRAWAHI:** This is the dialect spoken in Bhadrawah.
- (xiii) **GUJARI:** This is the language spoken by Gujars dwelling in the hills of Duggar.
- (xiv & xv) **RAMPURI and PONGLI:** These two dialects have common features with Dogri and also with Kashmiri.
- (xvi) **HOSHIARPUR PAHADI:** This is a dialect spoken in the hilly region of Hoshiarpur and is an example of a mixture of Kangri and Doabi of Jullundur.
- (xvii) **LAHNDI:** This is spoken in Poonch, Rajauri, Bhimbhar and Naushera areas.

Dogri, Kandyāli, Kāngri and Bhatiāli are very much alike and Grierson has classed the last three as sub-dialects of Dogri. Jammu Dogri used to be written in Ṭākari script. Kandyāli had no script of its own and for its writing, Ṭākari script used for Jammu Dogri was used. Chameāli script was used for Kāngri and Jammu Dogri script was used for Bhatiāli.

Three dialects of western Pahāri, i.e., Chameāli, Kullui and Mandiāli had their own Tākari script. It appears that the other dialects were either not written at all or, if written, they were written in the script current in the neighbouring areas.

If a vast lake spread over an uneven ground were to dry up, it will leave behind several ponds. The dialects of Duggar today look like such small ponds. The waters of these ponds, however, contain the remnants of the vast lake, which covered the whole region between the Sindhu and the Yamuna during the time of Takkas, and before and after them. The waves of this lake appeared from time to time in the shape of Shārdā, Lunde and various scripts of Ṭākari that flourished in this area and as recent as the 19th century, Cunningham noted Ṭākari being in use in the whole area. But today Ṭākari is virtually dead. Dogri-Pahāri dialects which found expression in it are, however, alive and current and they contain valuable treasure full of information, useful

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for research in the linguistic, historical, philological and social background of the Dogra people. Dogri writers of this century have adopted Devanagari and Persian scripts for writing in their mother-tongue. The main reason for this appears to have been the unfamiliarity of the pioneers of Dogri writing of this century with Tākari characters, incompleteness and inadequacy of Tākari for purposes of writing and absence of printing facilities. In Tākari, vowels were loosely written and often omitted and long and short vowels were frequently interchanged and initial vowels were written in place of non-initial ones. But Tākari script has its advantages. It is more suited to the nature and pattern of pronunciation of Dogra-Pahāri dialects. It is easy to write and set in type. It is scientific in its sound system because its writing is based on sounds. Perhaps, Tākari with suitable modifications would have served as a more appropriate vehicle for Dogri writing. Dogri writing in Devanagari presents a number of difficulties for the writer and also for the reader. The fact, however, remains that Dogri-Pahāri today is being written by each individual writer in his own way and no serious effort has so far been made to evolve what may be called 'standard Dogri'.

DOGRI LITERATURE

The following pages contain a brief description of Dogri literature—both folk and written—as it has emerged over the years. The method adopted is chronological in an attempt to show the development of different literary genres and individual writers over the years. While Dogri folk literature is fully developed with tremendous richness and variety, the written Dogri literature looks like an infant, compared to the literatures of many other Indian languages. And a good portion of it does not rise much higher than the folk level. It is more or less a regional literature, limited in volume and content and range. But it is truly representative of the Dogra community with a certain rustic flavour, a picturesque vividness of colour and a certain element of naivete. Its robustness and vigour, springing spontaneously from the soil and retain-

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ing its intrinsic regional character, its capacity to absorb the best from other languages according to its genius as seen in the recent translations and the lexical richness and semantic variety of the language as revealed in the collection of folk lore published by the J & K Academy hold out a bright promise for its future.

CHAPTER TWO

Dogri Folk Literature

I

DOGRI folk literature can be said to be a complete literature in itself. It has fulfilled the functions of a living literature for the Dogras over many generations, for hundreds of years, providing entertainment, instruction and means for self-expression, preserving the experience, values, beliefs and ideals of the people, and offering opportunities for the creative use of the language. Continuous variation being the very life-blood of this oral literature, it has a certain fluidity and comprehensiveness which are co-extensive with life itself. This folk literature is healthy and strong because of its closeness to the earth. It is mobile and ever-changing because of its nearness to life—flowing, changing, collecting, discarding—always new. It is naturally pure and full of sap like a stream because of its direct flow from the minds and hearts of the people. It is free from ostentation and the scaffoldings of sophisticated literature, and is content with direct expression in the briefest of words which are the salt of the earth. Universality, richness and variety, representative character and research potential are the main features of this literature as of most folk literatures all over the world.

Dogri folk literature is universal in two ways: Firstly, its

subjects are universal and the strands in which these subjects are woven are common, and secondly, it appears in the same forms all over Duggar—be it Akhnoor or Jammu, Udhampur or Basohli, Chambā or Kāngrā, Mandi or Bilāspur. Love and separation, birth and death, happiness and suffering, problems of human existence against the back-drop of nature, mutual relationships of human beings with their complexities—these are the subjects of folk literature the world over. Only, the way of presentation varies from place to place and people of different communities and countries have their own linguistic patterns and moulds, their own local — regional — natural backgrounds, their peculiar beliefs and customs and their faiths and ideas to shape and colour their folk literature. Songs flow directly from the heart but stories are the work of some deliberation and ingenuity, embodying in themselves some morals, some facets of life and the values and experiences of the community. Some folk-tales travel from one country to another and, taking on the local garb, become part of the local scene. Dogri folk-songs appear all over Duggar in the same form, except for minor variations and are sung in the same tunes, like the songs of ‘Chambe diā dhārā’ ‘Haripur Nurpur thandiān ni chhāwān’, ‘Ajjai dī ratī rau mere gaddiā’ and those describing the love of Kunju and Chainchalo and loves of cowherd Lord Krishna, and those containing dialogues between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law and between the jawan and his wife. Some place-names occurring in these songs, like Simla, Subāthu, Chambā, Jammu, Rāmban, Rajauri and Bhimbhar embrace the whole of Duggar. The Bār of Ram Singh is famous in Kāngrā, Nurpur and Jammu. Similarly, the stories of Siva and Pārvati and the one entitled ‘Wonder of the Soil’ are current everywhere. The traditions of prowess on the battle-field and the spirit of sacrifice found enshrined in the stories connected with shrines of Duggar are also universally respected.

Dogri folk literature is rich. From the innumerable songs,

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thousands of folk tales and idioms and hundreds of ballads add legends whatever little has been collected so far is but a small fraction. So far, about sixteen hundred songs and a few ballads have been collected from a limited source, i.e., Udhampur, Jammu, Akhnoor, Chambā, Kāngrā and Bhadrawah. If folk songs from all over Duggar are collected, their number would run into several thousands. The number of sayings and idioms collected from around Samba and Jammu is about 11 to 12 thousands. If the collection of these is extended to the whole of Duggar, their number would also run into lakhs. Several years ago, Dr Brown of Pennsylvania University collected about a hundred Dogri folk tales during the period he worked as a teacher of English in the Prince of Wales College, Jammu. Early in 1960's, one of his students Mrs. Norico Maida came from America to Jammu and collected about 400 Dogri folk-tales for her doctorate, from Akhnoor, Jammu, Udhampur and Katra. If folk-tales are collected from all over Duggar, their number would also run into thousands.

This literature presents itself in great variety, especially in its songs. From the moment of birth to the time of death of an individual, there are folk-songs about every activity of man. There are at least 30 types of folk-songs in Duggar, examples of which will be given in succeeding pages. Similarly Dogri folk-tales offer an immense variety.

Dogri folk literature is fully representative of the life of the people. It contains everything from the ideals, traditions and beliefs of the community to the vignettes of day to day domestic and social life. Myths and legends preserved in it contain historical sources and the cultural heritage of the community.

Dogri folk literature shows such forms and such uses of words that it offers a rich field of study for linguists, philologists, historians and sociologists. Historians can discover in them the ruins and remnants of languages of other communities who may have come here as conquerors or settlers and

their effects on the local people and threads of old cultures. Philologists and linguists can discover in them words and idioms of foreign origin and interesting changes that words and expressions undergo in the process of transplantation and hybridization. Writers can find therein a vast reservoir of words and expressions for their literary creations. Technical words for scientific terms and conceptions of this scientific age of ours may not be available there, but there is no dearth of words and expressions to express adequately all aspects of Dogra life as lived till the other day. On the other hand, there are certain concepts of this life which may not get adequate words in modern languages for their expression. The language used as seen in Dogri folk literature is simple, meaningful and full of lexical richness and syntactic variety.

2

The story of publication of Dogri folk literature is very recent. The first folk-songs of Dogri appeared in print towards the end of 1940s in a collection of Dogri poems brought out by the Dogri Samstha entitled *Jago Duggar*; two of these are love-songs, the third one offers a glimpse into Dogra domestic life and the fourth one is a newly composed folk-song about democracy. About the same time, three folk-songs appeared in a Hindi article on folk-songs of Duggar Desh by Prof. Ramnath Shastri in the Jammu Prince of Wales College magazine, *Tawi*. The songs were entitled 'Us Bhukkhiyān dhiyān' (We Hungry Daughters), 'Jhull baraideyā pattarā' (Flutter, O Pipal Leaf) and 'Ajj bi Ikkali' (Alone, Today and Forever). These three songs presented beautiful and representative examples of Dogri folk-songs.

Then in 1953-54, each of the three issues of *Namichetana* carried five folk-songs. The first issue carried a folk-song each from Chambā, Kāngrā, Basohli, Kandi and Sayojdhārā. The second carried a song each from Kāngrā, Kandi, Akhnoor,

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Jammu and Bhadrawāh; the first four of these were about Dogra Jawan and the fifth was a song about separated lovers. The third issue carried a dance-song of Gaddis, a duet between Prithi Singh and Inderdei, a song from Noorpur about life in the hills, a song of a woman separated from her soldier-husband gone on a campaign and a song from Chambā describing sweet-sad reminiscences of childhood. The fourth issue carried three songs from Chambā, 'Chambe diyā dhārā' 'Kunju and Chainchalo' and 'Algojua', and two songs from Bhadrawah. In the pages of *Namichetanā* also appeared for the first time two folk-tales: 'Parjā de Bhāg' and 'Kubbe gī latt'.

In 1954, Dogri Mandal, Jammu, published a small booklet *Amarkathā* describing the incidents in the life of Duggar's popular legendary hero Bawa Jitto. The same year Dunichand Hamirpuri of Kāngrā published two articles about folk-songs of Kāngrā—one entitled 'Folk Songs of Kāngrā' in *Ājkal* of Delhi and the second entitled 'Chhanal in Folk-songs' in *Dogra Sandes* of Dharmśālā. The first article gave examples of thirteen Dogri folk-songs and the second of two.

The next six years saw the publication of three collections of Dogri folk-tales and three of dogri folk-songs and some serious attempts to introduce Dogri folk literature to readers of Urdu, Hindi and English in various articles in magazines. The collections of folk-tales were *Ekk Hā Rājā* (nine tales) published by Dogri Samsthā, Jammu, *Paungar* (four tales) brought out by Dogri Sahitya Mandal, Jammu, in 1955 and *Dogri Lok Katthān* (15 tales) edited by Bansilal Gupta and published in 1957. Selections of Dogri folk-songs appeared in Susheela Salathia's *Khare Mitthe Atthrun* (Tears—Sour and Sweet) containing 25 *Suhāgs* and 18 *Ghorian* (songs connected with marriage) and M S. Randhawa's *Folk Songs of Kāngrā* containing 220 folk-songs or bits of such songs, both published in 1956 and *Folk Songs of Himachal* containing 87 folk-songs currently popular in Sirmaur, Mahasu, Bilaspur, Mandi and Chamba, brought out by the Public Relations Department of Himachal Pradesh Government, in 1960. Dunichand

Hamirpuri contributed some more articles based on and dealing with Dogri folk-songs to magazines like *Ājkal*, *Caravan* and *Sainik Samāchār* of Delhi, *Pāsbān* of Chandigarh and *Dogra Sandesh* of Dharamsala. Later these articles were published in the form of a book entitled *Folk Songs of Kāngrā* by Kangra Mitra Mandal, Bombay, in January 1958. An article in Hindi on Kangra valley and folk-songs and proverbs of its neighbouring region was contributed by Gambhir Raja in the Annual Number of a journal brought out by Kangra Sevak Sabha of Delhi. Shivanath made an attempt to introduce Dogri folk literature to English readers in his article 'Dogri Folk Literature' published in the November-December issue of *Kashmir Affairs* a bimonthly published from Delhi.

In 1962, Asia Publishing House published a collection of 31 Dogri folk-songs, edited by Dr Karan Singh, then Sadar-e-Riyāsat of Jammu and Kashmir. It was called *Shadow and Sunlight* and gave Dogri songs in original, their English and Hindi renderings and their tunes. The same year, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages published a dictionary of popular proverbs containing 500 proverbs collected by Tara Samailpuri. In 1964, the J & K Academy published its first collection of folk-songs which contained 195 songs—10 *Bihāis*, 20 *Ghoriān*, 81 *Jhanjhotis*, 20 *Bisanpatas*, 10 *Swaris*, 5 *Garloddhis*, 30 *Bhakhs*, 1 *Chhanda* and 5 *Dholarus*. In the beginning of 1966, it brought out the second and third volumes of *Dogri Folk Songs* containing 8 *Kārakas* and *Bārs*, 78 *Jhanjhotis*, 31 *Bhakhs* and 22 *Parvagitas* and a dictionary of idioms containing about 6000 idioms collected by Tara Samailpuri. In 1967, the J & K Academy brought out 37 Dogri folk-tales in a book called *Phull Chameli dā* following it up in 1968 by a fourth collection of Dogri folk-songs containing 155 songs sung on festive occasions like birth of a son and marriage. It has since added five volumes of Dogri folk-songs and six of Dogri folk-tales. Two additions to folk literature have come from Gautam Vyathit of Himachal Pradesh, one a collection of folk-tales called *Paharan de Aththrun* and

the second *Kangri Lok Geet*.

3

Folk-tales all over the world have a simple but telling and interesting way of expressing experiences of life and ways of working of men's minds, bringing out some moral or belief or truth of life. In Dogri folk-tales, this phenomenon appears in the local speech steeped in regional colours describing the life and problems and the ways of thinking of the Dogra people and their belief in the play of destiny in human lives. In the world of these tales there is nothing that cannot happen. One has to keep one's disbelief suspended in order to enjoy these tales. Here gods and goddesses assume human forms and join human beings in their play; birds and animals, streams and rivers, trees and snakes talk; lions go to the houses of their Brahmin priests to have a meal; ashes of the dead come to life by the sprinkling of nectar (*Amrita*); buried infants sprout up in the shape of mango trees and jasmine creepers and put forth flowers; a man is turned into a cock with magic, a wooden horse begins to fly in the sky and trees grow *babbarus* (leavened sweet bread fried in clarified butter) instead of fruits. Everything is possible but the values enshrined in the tales and sustaining the society are clear. These values are: Destiny is stronger than human ingenuity; truth cannot be hidden for long; sacrifice brings fame; there is no end to lust and ambition and hatred and they bring bad results; one who digs a pit for others himself falls into it; death fulfils its task in various forms; one has to reap the fruit of one's own action; alms given to an undeserving person can cause harm instead of earning merit; wisdom and courage can do wonders and the caste of a person is to be recognised by the work he does and not by his birth.

A large number of Dogri folk-tales have a prince or a princess as the main character. Duggar was all along a country

of Rajas and princelings and feudal lords where people were like grass and leaves, while the princes and landlords were like trees among them. What happened in the lives of the common people might not have much significance, but what happened to the princes and the well-to-do was significant. Stories about their lives, therefore, appealed to the people because where, on the one hand, they satisfied the curiosity of the people about the lives of the high, they served as lessons for the common folk. Princes and kings were like toys in the hands of Destiny caught in the inexorable, irreversible wheel of cause and effect and their power and wealth were of no avail. If this was the case with powerful rulers of men, what came to the lot of the common folk had to be accepted.

On the basis of the published material available up to 1970, Dogri folk-tales may be classified into ten main types described in the following paragraphs.

(1) *Those relating to play of gods and goddesses*: Many of these are connected with the *lila* of Siva and Parvati and some are about Krishna and Hanuman. Those about Sivalila are 'Shiva Mehmā', 'Parjā de bhāg', 'Asali Bhagat' and 'Mane dā khot'. One about Krishnalila is 'Bharuā', and the one about Hanuman is called 'Bhale laine de dene pe'. 'Parjā de bhāg' is a very popular tale in Duggar. Siva and Parvati were passing over a place cursed with twelve-year drought and they saw the parched land, with men, birds and beasts dying of hunger and thirst and a lone lean farmer driving two emaciated bulls yoked to the plough in a wasteland that had not seen water for three years. Parvati's compassion had the better of Siva's stony indifference and she asked, "What sort of land is this that has nothing green in it and what is that lonely cringing thing, my Lord?"

"This is the cursed land", replied Siva, "and there is going to be no rain here for 12 years. That man keeps on the play of ploughing lest the survivors should forget how to plough."

Parvati reminded her Lord that if he did not blow his

Nada (a sort of bugle) for 12 years, he too was likely to forget how to blow it. "Lest I should have already forgotten it during these three years, I shall just try," saying so Siva put his *Nada* to his lips and lo and behold! Black clouds started racing from all directions and there was rain and water all round. Parvati looked at Siva with a quizzical smile and he smiled back. "Strange is the destiny of a people," he said.

(2) *Mythological folk-tales* : These have for their characters some figures from Hindu Mythology like the story about sending for a *vaidya* when Ravana fell ill or the story of Babbruvāhana and Arjuna and Ulupi in relation to Babbhor, the ancient capital city of Dogras now in ruins, or the story about the killing of Suddha Rakshasa.

(3) *Tales about local deities, saints and places of pilgrimage*: like those about Bhairon, Siddh Gorla, Bawa Surgal, Bhair, Purmandal and Vaishno Devi which draws lakhs of pilgrims every year (like the shrine of Jwala Bhagwati in Kangra, the shrine of Vaishno Devi in Jammu is an important centre of worship of Durga).

(4) *Tales of wit and humour dealing with social inequalities, old tottering social values and customs, superstitions and so on*: like the stories of 'Satt Murakh', 'Jahta masān', 'Dassen ānen dī pheem', 'Marjād', 'Khote dī chori', 'Nakke dī sedha jāyān te sāg sattun khāyān', 'Ḍumkā lārā', 'Ālsī ṭabbar', 'Lekhā dhull', 'Vaihmi Rājā', and 'Rānī Khān dā sālā'. 'Jahta Masān' and 'Rānī Khān dā sālā' are satires on easy gullibility, 'Vahmī Rājā' on superstition, 'Dassen ānen dī phīm' on corruption and bribery and 'Ālsī Ṭabbar' on laziness. A passer-by saw a boy lying motionless under a fruit tree. He thought the boy was dead but when he approached him, the boy moved his eyes pointing to the fruit lying on his body and gesturing to the passer-by to place it in his mouth. Thinking that the boy was sick, he obliged, but was taken aback when the boy said, "What a fool you are! you placed the fruit on the left side of the mouth". The boy did not want to take the trouble of moving his tongue. The passer-by went to complain against the boy

to his father lying under another tree, only to be told, "Last night I shouted a dozen times beseeching the slothful members of my family to come and drive away the calf eating my beard, but nobody came."

(5) *Tales which have some moral or lesson from life* as the main theme like 'chumm, dumm te hirdā' which shows that by marrying for physical beauty, a man suffered and another by marrying for qualities of the heart got happiness. 'Kāl devtā' shows how death performs its functions by taking on different forms. 'Karmaphal' shows that one gets fruits of previous karmas and this life is the result of those. 'Mitti di karāmāt' shows how environment affects one's behaviour and 'Bhāg Karnīkar', 'Sārsatī' and 'Lekhen de lakhaint' show that destiny is inevitable. 'Chār sloka', 'Parāshchit', 'Kalpa-mundarī', 'Poombā', 'Chandāl kun', 'Mautī dā dar', 'Lālsā dī haddī', 'Satjug', 'Jālokhālā', 'Chār sayāne chor', 'Papmahabalī' are also stories of this category.

(6) *Tales of adventure*: These are stories full of imagination where a prince endangers his own life fighting with devils and demons and marries a fairy, or a prince taunted by his sister-in-law leaves the house and goes out on a long adventure after which he marries the princess Latan or Kushjadi and brings her home, or an intelligent girl wins over a prince by well-planned stratagem. In some of the stories parrots and mynas figure and become instrumental in helping the hero or the heroine.

(7) *Domestic Tales dealing with animosities and bickerings between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law or between co-wives or sisters-in-law* like 'Oḍanun' and 'Chameli dā phul'. A raja has seven wives and he is fond of the youngest who is the prettiest and the sweetest. She is also the one who holds forth the promise of giving him a son. The others who are childless are jealous and plan to run her down. The youngest Rani delivers twins—a boy and a girl—but the other Ranis replace them immediately after delivery by dead mice and the Raja is told that the darling of his heart has delivered only dead

mice. The Raja is annoyed and his beloved is humiliated and alienated from the Raja.

(8) *Parables which have for their characters, birds and animals*, like 'Mirg te gidh', 'Sherai dā dil', 'Pakkharue di sikkh', 'Mittartā', 'Mahābali' and 'Amar Patāko'. 'Pakkharue di sikkh' is the story of a doting Raja and his capricious Rani who wants him to get for her a palace of feathers. She turns a deaf ear to his protestations that it would involve slaughter of thousands of denizens of the air and enters the Kopabhavan. The Raja sends for the king of birds who, sensing danger, sends his wazir (minister) to the Raja with compliments and regrets his inability to attend immediately due to pressing preoccupation. The Raja cannot brook delay and wants the king of birds to present himself at once. The king of birds comes and bows to the Raja who asks, "What were you engaged in". "Oh Sir! I was having a census of human beings of your kingdom taken with the help of all the birds. The work is just completed and I have come post-haste." "What is the result?" "Sir, there are more females than males in your kingdom," said the king of birds. "How can that be? Only last year we got the counting done and there were more males than females." "Sir, we have counted henpecked men also among females. Maybe that accounts for the difference." "Oh! I see."

The veiled reference went home and realization dawned on the Raja and he sent away the king of birds without a word about feathers.

(9) *Hotchpotch tales without any moral or any other serious interest*, like stories entitled 'Nājorani', 'Sukkha', 'Babb-ruen dā bootā'. These are yarns woven simply to while away time. There was a boy and he had a sister and they went to a feast where they were served Babbarus (fried sweet leavened bread). The girl ate her Babbarus but the boy came home and dug a pit in the backyard and put his share of Babbarus there. In the course of time a plant sprouted from the pit and when it grew into a tree, it bore Babbarus for fruits. Now there was

an old witch who loved to eat the tender flesh of young boys and girls, particularly those fattened on Babbarus and she managed to get hold of the boy. The story narrates how the boy reaches the witch's house and her daughter falls in love with him and how the witch dies and the witch's daughter dies, etc.

(10) *Tales about sacrifices of martyrs and places connected with these martyrs, which are in the nature of legends about local heroes* : 'Bāwā Jitto', 'Dātā Ranu', 'Rāni-Rull', 'Gugga Saloh', 'Baba Dyot Singh', 'Sati Sheelwanti', and 'Mahādevi' fall in this class. Jitto was a Brahmin, who stood for his rights and against extortion by the feudal chief. He killed himself in protest on the heap of harvested grain and his spirit haunted and hounded the chief and his family. Every year a big fair called Jhiri fair is held at the shrine of Bāwā Jitto and draws huge crowds.

4

Dogri proverbs and idioms form a very important element of Dogri folklore besides being treasuries of subtle and effective use of language. These are also store-houses of information about Dogra life and experiences of the community and practical wisdom, thinking and beliefs of the people. They are like pebbles shining on the banks of streams and rivers and water-ways and *khadds* of Duggar. Life flows on and these sayings and idioms are thrown aside by the flow of life and history. They enshrine a simple philosophy of life derived direct from daily living. They have the quality of saying much in the fewest words by hitting the nail on the head, of presenting the essence of experience and bringing home a lesson effectively.

PROVERBS :

Dogri proverbs can be classified as under:

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1. Those revealing close connection of religion and mythology with the daily life of the people:

*Khāne gī chaturbhuj
kamme gī Jagannāth.*

For eating Chaturbhuj, the four-armed god
and for work Jagannāth, the armless god.

*Agge hatth, Pichhe hatth,
āye mere Bhagīrath.*

Here comes my Bhagīrath dangling his arms.

Bele dī namāz, Kabele diān takkarān

Prayer at the proper time only bears fruit.

Kutte dī maut āwai tān masītī chahi mūttaradā

When death calls him, a dog enters the mosque to piss.

2. Those revealing the philosophy of life of the people :

*Manā Bhāndā Khāchai,
jaga bhāndā lāchai*

Eat what pleases you,
wear what pleases the world.

Baddhā marai te khullā charai

In freedom there is life,
in bondage lies death.

Paihle ātmā pichhūn paramātmā.

First self, then God.

*Uttam Khetī, maddham bapār
nikhiddha chākarī, bhikkha duhār.*

Farming is the best, next best is trade.

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*Dhiḍḍha neī péaiyān ruṭṭiyān
tān sārīān gallān khuṭṭiyān.*

On empty stomach, nothing appeals.

3. Those enshrining certain morals:

*Siyāne di sikkh te
amle da svād pichhuān
chetai aundā ai*

Advice of the wise and taste of Amla fruit—
one realises afterwards.

Kara majūrī khā chūrī.

Work hard and you will always have the best food.

4. Those containing the essence of experience:

*Āpun moe binā
Surga neīn labadā.*

To know something one must have a first-hand experience of it.

*Bhummanūn gai uḍḍarde
nan rumbalū pharolade*

If you turn and touch an old moth-eaten blanket, you will only
raise a cloud of small shreds.

*Jinne talle unnā pālā,
jinnā ṭabbar unnā jālā.*

The more clothes you put on, the colder you feel,
the larger the family, the greater the woes.

*Barsāntī dī dhupp
Mātareān di jhīrak.*

The sharp sun of rainy season is like the scolding of a
step-mother.

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Dāne mukkī ge jarāne trufflge

When the wealth is gone, friends are also gone.

Jinde kohlen dāne unde kamale bi siyāne.

Well-to-do man's children, though foolish,
are considered intelligent.

Jhūṭha guṛ te sacha pippali

Falsehood is sweet like jaggery,
truth is bitter like *pippal*-herb.

5. *Those aimed at being witty, satirical and effective in bringing home a point:*

*Jeendegi dāngān
moengi bāngān.*

(said in respect of a person who was maligned and maltreated when alive but is praised to the skies after his death.)

*Din charhe tān attān-mattān
rāt pavaitān charkhā kattān.*

(said of a person who avoids doing work when there is time for it and speaks of doing it when it cannot be done.)

*Kukkaṛ bāng nein
deg tān lo gai nein hog.*

(meaning literally, Will not the day break if the cock does not crow?)

Jāti dī koṛh-kiralī te shatīren gī japphe.

(said of a person of low means aspiring for a very high position.)

Ghar nein kuttī te gavā dī soh.

(meaning literally, She does not have even a dog in the house but she swears by a cow.)

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Annā kuttā bāu gi bhounkai.

A blind dog barking at the breeze.

Babbai neīn mārī piddarī te puttar tīr-andāz

(said of one who brags too much.)

Bhikkha de ŷugare te laungen de ḍakār.

(also said of one who hides his real position and boasts of things he does not have.)

6. *Those connected with the caste-system and characteristics of various castes:*

*Jaṭṭa muhasal brāhman shāh
baniā hākam, lakkā phāh.*

If a Jat becomes a collector, a Brahmin a trader and a Banja an officer, they will make a mess.

*Āpūn gale brāhmanā Ranne
jajmān bi gālē.*

The priest harmed himself
and he harmed his client also.

*Kuttī marai chāīn
dī mārī te mīen chā shakāre dā.*

(said ironically about Rajputs going to hunt and killing an itch-plagued dog.)

*Ḍoomkī kuṛī te
bhrā gī chāgghiyān.*

(said of a low-caste who aims too high.)

*Puttar jamman khatrainiān
te bich bich brahmaniān
ikk de ikki māu dā duddha*

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*ohde thamān baddh
apanī buddh.*

Sons of khatris are born clever. The art of making twenty-one out of one is in their blood and with self-effort they can make even more. Some Brahman boys are also clever.

7. *Those connected with changing seasons and their effects on the life of the community:*

*Dassaihrā phakoā āe sīt
Lohrī phakoi ge sīt
āyeā basant, pāle urant.*

Winter comes with Dassehra and goes with Lohri,
with the coming of spring, cold disappears.

Soai saunā te barsāntī nhaunā

Sleeping is good in summer and bathing is good in rains.

Jeṭha hāra kukkhen, sauna bhādrōn rukkhen.

During months of Jayeshtha and Asharā indoors,
during months of Shrawan and Bhādrapada under the trees.

Barhai magher kanaken de dher.

If it rains in the month of Margashirsha,
wheat crop will be good.

*Pālā bachēn dā sālā
joānen dā bhāl te buḍḍhen dā joāl*

Cold is like wife's brother for the children.
It is like a brother to the young and a son-in-law for the old.

There is another proverb in verse about the cold season evoking images of Dogra life—a child is born, grows young and goes for fighting and is killed.

*Assū sāyālā jammeā, kattaka hoā tiyār
magghar phaujan chārhiyan, poh larāl ho
Magha syata mareā, phaugan pedā sog.*

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Cold was born in Asuja, grew young in Kartika, went on a campaign in Margashiroha and fought the battle in Pausa. It was killed in Magha and everything was in mourning in Phal-guna.

8. *Those connected with agriculture:*

Kanakai uppar bī, māu uppar dhī.

Like good crop from good seed, a daughter takes after her mother.

Khetī kḥasmai seti

Farming requires good husbandry.

*Jithe paili khabbal
utthen phasal abbal,
jithe paili deela utthen phasal pīlā
jithe paili roṛa utthen phasal chaur.*

(connecting the crop with the types of soil.)

Some sayings are universal and they appear in various parts of the world in the local idiom, some are bound with native traditions and are found in various languages of India in more or less similar form and some are purely regional. Examples of these three types are given below:

1. *Akkhien olhai pardes* (Dogri)
Ankhon se door dil se door (Hindi)
Ankh ojhal pahār ojhal (Urdu)
Out of sight out of mind (English)
2. *Kuja rājā bhoj kujā gangū telī* (Dogri)
Kahan raja bhoja kahan gangu teli (Hindi)

OR

Āp kachajjī te behṛe alengī dosh (Dogri)
Nacha nān jānen āngan terhā (Hindi)

(meaning, A bad workman quarrels with his tools.)

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or

Pānī pīchai puniyai guru banāchai chuniyai (Dogri)
Guru karbe jene, jala khabe chene (Bengali)

(meaning, Filter the water well before drinking, select your guru carefully.)

or

Palren nein phutti biāi keh janai pīr parāi (Dogri)
Jake pai nan jae biwai
So Kya jane peer parai (Braja)

(meaning, You cannot know another's pain unless you experience it yourself.)

3. Those relating to castes—about Rajputs, about hereditary shopkeepers and about priests examples of which have been given earlier. Another example is given below:

Pindai dā bigāre dā palaṭanī ch sauradā.

A spoilt youngman of the village does well in the army.

IDIOMS

A few characteristics observed in 6,000 idioms collected by Tara Samailpuri are given below:

- (1) A large number of them are formed around certain basic words connected with parts of human body, some objects of daily use or nature or some concepts. There are 125 idioms with the central word heart, (*hirda*), 115 with matter (*galla*), 107 with head (*sir*), 68 each with mind (*mana*) and eyes (*akh*) and so on.
- (2) Some idioms have more than one meaning, as for example:
Galla lāni means both to start a topic and to taunt.
- (3) Some idioms, very much alike, change meaning with change in one or two words:

Nān rakkhanā means 'to put a price'.

Nān rakkhī lainā means 'to preserve honour'.

Nān reī jānā means 'to remain in name only'.

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- (4) Some idioms retain the same meaning even after change of a word or two:

Nās karanā,

Nās puṭṭana

Nās māranā all mean the same thing, 'to destroy'.

- (5) Some idioms change meaning in plural:

Nazar phaṭanī means 'to get dazed on seeing from a great height'.

Nazarān phaṭi janiyān means 'to go to one's head'.

These idioms and many more, heard only orally at present, point to richness, expressiveness and effectiveness of the language.

RIDDLES

Phalaunis or riddles also occupy an important place in the life of the Dogra community. The elders pose these riddles to children at the time of narrating stories and the children try to find out the meanings of these riddles. Brevity and artistic use of language are indispensable features of these riddles which, while entertaining the people, help in increasing the knowledge (and stimulating the imagination) of the participants. Here are a few examples of Dogri riddles:

Akkhanī-mak-khanī

Dinen bharochī

Ratīn sak-khanī.

(describes *Bilang*—a piece of rope tied in a corner under the ceiling on which quilts, bed-covers, blankets, etc. are hung when cots are removed. During night it is empty, during day it is full.)

Dhārā uppar kuppā

Ad-dhā chhānwān

Addhā dhuppā.

(describes *Goltre*—half in shade and half in the sun, situated on an ascending hill.)

Nikkī neī kuṛī

Gaj bhar parāndā.

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(describes needle and thread, needle standing for a puny girl and thread for the yard-long hair plait.)

*Ma jammī nein,
Puttar kothe uppar.*

(describes fire and smoke. Even before the mother is born or the fire is kindled, its son, the smoke goes over the roof.)

*Olanūn-molanūn,
Bhittai piche kholanūm.*

(describes shoes, always taken off at the doorstep before entering the house and placed behind the door out of sight.)

Gentle humour, creative imagination and glimpses of the life of Dogras are revealed through these and similar other riddles.

5

Three types of Ballads or long narrative poems are found in Dogri folk literature. They are *Bhetas*, *Kārakas* and *Bārs*.

BHETAS

Bhetas are usually sung in temples and places of pilgrimage and they contain prayers, praises of deities and narratives of their miracles and boons. Among the Bhetas of female deities, forms of Shakti, those about Jwālā Bhagavatī of Kangra, Vaishno Devī of Katra, Sukrālādevī of Bhaddu, Mahāmāyā of Jammu, Kālikā of Bāhu, Chichīdevī of Samba and Manasā Devī of Ramnagar are well known. Of the Bhetas about male deities, those sung at Suddha Mahadev in Chanaini, Baijnath in Kangra, Basuki Kund in Bhadravah and Mana Mahesh of Kullu are better known. A Bheta of Jwālā devī runs like this:

Mātā, you have made Baikunṭha
Pān, supārī, dhvajā and a coconut are my first offerings to you,
Mother,

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You have made Baikunṭha, Mātā.
Red garment on your person suits you well,
And you bear a saffron mark on the forehead, Mother.
You have made, Baikunṭha, Mātā
Akbar came to your court, Devī, bare-foot,
and made an offering of a gold canopy, Mother.
You have made, Baikunṭha, Maiya.

This Bheta has been published in Randhawa's collection. Bhetas of Vaishno and Kālkā have been included in the collection of folk-songs brought out by the Jammu and Kashmir Academy.

KARAKAS

Kāarakas deal with description of incidents in the lives of gods, goddesses, saints and martyrs. These are usually sung at the shrines of the concerned gods and goddesses and at the *dehrīs* of the martyrs. Kāarakas of Bava Jitto, Data Ranu, Raja Bahu Rull are very popular in Duggar. Others less popular are about those of Bawa Bhaira, Bawa Surgala, Bawa Siddha Gorla, Vipranath, Bawa Kura, Mai Moli, Bawa Nahar Singh and other martyrs. Jitto sacrificed his life for unholding his right. He stood against the extortion and forced exploitation by the local chief Mehta Bir Singh. Going up the heap of grains produced with the sweat of his brow, he thrust a dagger in his heart. (Later his small daughter burnt herself on the pyre of her dead father.)

O Mehta, Here is some meat for you to eat with the wheat
With 'Ram! Ram!' on his lips he thrust the dagger in his heart!

Raja Bahu Rull allowed herself to be buried alive so that her father-in-law might see water flowing in the canal got dug by him for the benefit of his subjects. When she was sent for by her father-in-law, she went in a palanquin knowing fully well as to why she had been called. She touched the feet of her mother-in-law and was ready to die. As the workers raised the wall around her, she sang:

Hear, O men, pile the bricks behind me and in front of me.
But keep my breasts uncovered!

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Hear, O men, Arjan and Surjan will come this way
And I will give them mouthful of milk each.
Hear, O men, put the bricks behind me and in front of me.
But keep my arms free.
Hear, O men, my brother will come this way
And I will hold him in my embrace.
Hear, O men, arrange the bricks behind me and in front of me.
But keep my eyes uncovered!
Hear, O men, my Kainta will come this way
And I will fill his form in my eyes!

BARS

Bārs are heroic ballads which describe in stirring lines the sacrifice, valour, courage and skill in battle of renowned heroes. They are sung on occasions of fairs and festivals and in the courts of Rajas or assemblies of people. Bārs of Gugga, Ramsingh Pathania, Raja Gopichand, Raja Bhartrihari are among the most popular in Duggar. Bārs of Jaimal Fatta and Kalibir are also fairly popular. In the region of Jammu, Bārs of Miān Dido, Vazir Zorawar and his generals Basti Ram, Vazir Ratnu, Hoshiara and Raj Singh are also sung. At some places, the Bār of Mir Das Chauhan is also sung. In Sirmaur, 'Bār' is called 'Hār', and 'Hārs' of Madana, Kamana, Hoku, Sama and Noendi are current among the people there and around.

The Bārs of Gugga and Mirdas Chauhan have been published in the second volume of folk songs brought out by the Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages. The former finds a place in the collection of folk'-songs by Randhawa also. The Bār of Ramsingh Pathania appears in the collection of Dunichand and those of Raja Gopichand and Bhartrihari appear in Randhawa's collection in parts. The latter are full of the sentiment of compassion (*Karuna rasa*). Given below are examples from these two Bārs:

You are yourself responsible for my becoming a Jogī,
why do you feel sorry now, mother?
Mothers whose sons go away are heart-broken.

—Gopichand's Bār

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What is this body-cage made of?
What is this world-trap made of?
Understand this Raja Bhartrihari.
False is this body-cage and false is this world.

—Bhartrihari Bār

The Bār of Ram Singh is steeped in the sentiment of valour (*Vīra rasa*):

Ramsingh was a king incarnate.
He held the sword from his birth
He fought with the might of his arm
He put to sword four battalions.
He made blood flow in streams
The Pathahia fought from the fort and from outside.
Now he was near here, and then he was far away
He distributed gunpowder in drops.
And he distributed arrows by handfuls
And the *daphlās* sounded from the hill of Dala
And the *tambūr* was sounded from the banyan post.
Ram Singh fought from the fort
Ram Singh was a king incarnate.

It is often asked as to why there are no love-ballads in Dogri, particularly when the neighbouring Panjab has such fine examples as Heer-Ranjha and Sohni-Mahiwal to offer. Not that there is any dearth of the sentiment of love or stories of love which form the subject of numerous folk-songs. 'Bānki Gaddan' is one such story enshrining the love of Raja Sansarchand of Nagarkot for a Gaddi woman. But it is current more in the form of a folk-song and has not been taken up by professional minstrels as a subject for a Bār proper. In Duggar there is great respect for the established social values and norms of social behaviour and not only any deviation from these norms is looked down upon but even its mention is discouraged. The Bārs in particular do not give place to any subjects which may praise or eulogise such deviations. Sacrifice, renunciation, bravery on the battle-field, preservation of honour at the cost of life, strong faith in established religion—these are some of the values which have been propagated through the Bārs popular in Duggar. Love

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outside the field of established and accepted modes of social behaviour was not, therefore, dealt with in Bārs. Story of Roop Vasanta forms the subject of a Dogri Bār because it deals with love between two brothers. Even the Bār of Hansa-Moranī which describes the vicissitudes of love of Princess Moranī for Raja Hansa puts more emphasis on the failure of Moranī's father Raja Chilamrai to keep his word than on the final success of her love over the opposition of her father.

Dogri Bārs are sung by professional hereditary minstrels locally known as Daresas, Gārḍīs and Jogīs, to the accompaniment of the beat of the drum and the playing of stringed instruments called King and Chakara. The manner of recitation in a rather humdrum beat creates an atmosphere charged with emotion by the rise and fall of tone and variations in rhythm and shifting of stress. Dogri Kāraḱas and Bārs have elements of a ritual and are as effective on the audience as perhaps Greek plays in olden times used to be for the Greek audiences. The description and narrative are direct, the language is simple, but the way of presentation is such that on hearing a heroic ballad, the listeners are aroused to feelings of courage and sentiment of 'do or die', and listening to a Bār about a compassionate subject produces an effect filling the hearts of the listeners with compassion and their eyes with tears.

6

Dogri folk songs are like myriad-coloured flowers which present Dogra life in all its aspects—its simple joys as well as its sufferings and problems. The songs are innumerable and their forms are many. The songs sung on various occasions have different names.

BIHAIS

The songs which are sung on the occasion of birth of an

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infant are called *Bihāis*. These songs are also sung on birth-days and functions like *reet* and *sūttarā* connected with the growth of a baby. A few examples of *Bihāis* are given below in English translation :

1. It is the dark month, and nights are dark
when Krishna Murārī is born
2. A son is born to Vasudeva and Jashodā stays in bed
Nanda gives cows to Brahmins with their horns covered
with gold.
Bhāṭs, Brahmins give blessings—'Long live Krishna.'
Women of Braj come to see him, decked with sixteen *kalās*.
3. I am very lucky, today
Gaṇapati has come to my courtyard,
Brahmā has himself come to preside over the birth,
With him has come Satī Sāvitṛī,
I am very lucky, to-day
Vishṇu has come to see his upbringing
With him has come Satī Lakshmī. . . .
I am very lucky, to-day. . . .
Sītā has come and Rāmchandra has come
With them has come Jati Lakshmaṇa
I am very lucky, to-day
Shambhu has come on the back of a bull
With him has come Pārvaṭī
I am very lucky, to-day
Nārada has come, playing on his Bīṇā
With him has come Jati Bhairon
I am very lucky to-day.

LORIS

Loris are sung to put a child to sleep and to make the child quiet. These songs are expressive of the affection and hopes and fears of mothers and grandmothers and other women in the house in relation to the child.

Dinniān Lorī, Munnuā, sei jāyan, O!

THAL AND NARATTE

Thāl and *Naratte* are sung by small girls who sing them during Navarātrās and while planting seeds of grains and drawing circles of various colours around their *thāls* or at the

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time of taking the seedlings to the river. Some of these contain praises of the Devī or description of Krishṇalīlā. Songs about the lives of Rāma and Krishṇa are very popular among Dogras, and incidents like those of Rāma breaking the bow and marrying Sītā and Krishṇa riding on the hood of Kāliya Nāga are the subjects of many such songs. Two examples are given below:

1. The father has declared—I shall give
my daughter to one who breaks the bow
If the bow does not break, I shall remain
unmarried, sisters!
How will the bow break? the sons of
Dasaratha are too tender-aged, sisters!
2. "Take the bangles of our hands
we will give you bags full of lakhs."
"Mother Jasodā churns the curds
She must have a rope of Naga."

GUJARIS

Gujarīs are also songs mostly concerning the *līlā* of the cowherd god Krishṇa. Some of them are duets between Krishṇa and the Gopīs and some tell about the Gujarīs and Krishṇa:

Here goes the pretty gujarī of Mathurā
Here comes the cowherd boy of Gokul
This Gujarī of Mathurā is fair
This cowherd boy is too dark!
O Gujarī, who is he that has charmed your heart
Who is he that laughed with the laughter of flowers
Who is he that shepherds the cows?
O Gujarī, who has made a place in your heart?

ĀRATIS

Āratīs are songs in praise of gods and goddesses which contain praises of gods and also prayers for well-being, prosperity and gifts of progeny. There are *Āratīs* to Siva, Devī Bhagavatī and Lakshminārāyaṇa. Here is an example of an *Āratī* sung on the occasion of Navarātrās:

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Hare Nārāyaṇa Govinda
I worship your idol,
I turn the string of beads,
I go to the gate of heaven.

BISANPATA

Then there are *Bisanpatās* which are the same as Hindi Bhajans.

CHHINJAN AND DHOLARU

Chhinjān, *Rittaris* and *Ḍholarūs* are sung on the occasion of change of seasons. Wandering minstrels go from house to house, sing to the beating of the drum and announce the name of the new month. An example of a *Ḍholarū* is given below:

First of all remember Lord Rāma who created this whole world
Then remember your father and mother who have ushered you
into the world
Then name Baisakha coming after Chaitra and
follow the path of piety
Here sounds *Ḍholarū* coming after twelve months
These days come once in twelve months
All the seasons come again and again
But man once gone does not come again

BARAN MAH

Bārān Māh is the name given to songs describing the seasons of twelve months and description of the emotional state of one separated from her husband during the twelve months:

Soldiers—servants of the Raja are wayfarers
They mount the horses to go.
You are going away to a distant place, my love,
My heart is weak and I faint.

In the month of Chaitra, I observe fasts in the name of Devī
You went to a distant land, I did not observe them
In the month of Baisākha, grapes ripen
You remained away, and I did not taste them
In the month of Jeth, the Sun beats hard
You remained away, I slept out in the open under the sky

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In the month of Hār, mangoes ripened
You did not come, I did not pluck any.
In the wet month of Sauna, swings were put on the trees
You remained away, I did not swing.
In the dark month, nights are dark
Those, whose husbands are at home, lighted lamps
You remained in Pardesh, I passed them in the dark.
In Asū, I give offerings to the ancestors
You remained far away, I had no heart in them
In Kattak came Dayālī and those with husbands
at home played games
You remained away, I didn't celebrate it.
In Maghar, people got new quilts filled with cotton
Those with husbands at home used them
You did not come, I let mine remain on the peg
and so on to Phālgua.

FESTIVAL SONGS

There are many songs connected with fairs and festivals.
There are songs about Holī, Lorhī, Jhirī, Chaitra Chaudas,
the fair of Haripur and Dassahra of Kullu. Here is a Holi
song :

O colourful Prince charming, play Holi,
O Mahārājā, let us play Holī
From one side came Shyām Kanhaiyā
From the other came Rādhā gorī.
O Mahārājā, let us play Holi
Pichkārī full of colour, he poured on me from the front
My *angiā* got completely drenched,
O Mahārājā, let us play Holī.

Songs of *Lorhī* are sung by groups of boys and girls who
go from door to door and sing these songs and collect fuel
and money for celebrating the festival.

SWADIS AND LADDIS

Swādī is the name given to songs sung while sowing, plough-
ing and harvesting in company. *Garloḍḍis* are songs sung
while putting roofs and *Laddis* are sung while carrying wood.

DANCE SONGS

Some songs are sung as accompaniment to dances like *Kudd*, *Phumanīs* or *Bhāṅgrā*. Some of them are just a collage of words without any meaning. These words are meant to support the rhythm.

Jhākkā, Mjhakkā—Jhakkālū!

SUHAG AND GHORIS

In Dogri there are many songs connected with marriage. Songs sung at the bride's house are called *Suhāg* and those sung at the bridegroom's house are called *Ghoṛī*. *Bolīs Sīthanīs*, and *Chhand* are also sung on the occasion of marriage.

In *Suhāgs*, there is description of feelings of a bride to be, or a bride, of affection of the bride's parents and her brothers, of the atmosphere at the time of bride's departure from her parents' house and of reception of the bride in her in-laws' house. The girl tells her father :

Father, find a groom for me

.....
He should be like a moon among stars
He should be like Krishna among gods
Find a groom like Kanhaīyā, father.

At the time of the function of marriage when the bride and bridegroom go round the fire, the women sing :

Who are the persons awake now?
This is the time of dharma, Rājā,

.....
The father of the girl is awake now
He gives gold, he gives silver
He gives his daughter
This is the time of dharma, Rājā.

At the time of bride's departure from her parents' house, her friends sing:

The swallows are twittering
Father, the palanquin does not pass through the door
We shall remove some bricks to make way for the palanquin
Daughter, go to your home

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and when the bride reaches her father-in-law's house, the women there sing:

Bride, do not jingle yours bangles
Do not frighten our boy!
The bride is fair, the bride is fair!
Thank God, her mother has sent her!

In *Ghoris* there is usually the praise of *Sehrā*, the mare, the parents of the bride and other relatives and description of rites connected with the bridegroom's mounting the mare before going to the bride's house.

SITHANIS AND CHHANDA

In *Sithanis* and *Bolīs*, the relatives of the bride complain and abuse in an inoffensive manner the bridegroom and his relatives and the women connected with the bridegroom's house. Similarly there are songs denigrating and abusing the bride and her relatives. When the bridegroom goes to the bride's house, the girl friends of the bride collect around the bridegroom and force him to sing something which is given the name *Chhanda*.

LOHANIS AND PALLAS

It is not only on the occasion of birth and marriage that songs are sung in Dogri. There are folk-songs for the occasion of death also. These folk-songs are of two types, one called *Lohānīs* which are sung to the accompaniment of rhythm of beating of the breast in a fast tempo and the other *Pallā* which are sung in a slow dirge-like movement laying stress on two words to the accompaniment of sobbing and weeping.

MISCELLANEOUS—FAMILY LIFE

Joint family is the basic unit of Dogra life and there are many folk-songs which deal with the life of a bride at her father-in-law's house, her life at her parents' house, mutual feelings between the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law and between the sister-in-law and the brother-in-law, between the

bride and her husband's sister, between brother and sister, between mother and son and between the husband and his wife.

A bride returning for the first time from her father-in-law's house speaks to her mother like this:

Fire to the town of my in-laws, mother,
I will not live there,
Mother, I will not make it my home
They make me carry cowdung, they make me scrub utensils,
They make me tend the cattle, they make me cook their food
Fire to the heat of the hearth, mother, I will not live there.

A woman enquires about her parents and her brother from a wandering minstrel who happens to call:

Berhai bauh Jogiā
Binnā lai jogiā
Migī
Pyoke dī galla sunā jogiā
Come and sit in my courtyard, O jogi
Tell me all about my parents' house.

When the mother-in-law goes out, the daughter-in-law has the freedom to prepare food according to her own taste; she makes *pūrās*, and she sings like this:

Mother-in-law has gone to Lahore
and I am the mistress of the house, sisters!

Suddenly the mother-in-law returns without warning and out of scare the daughter-in-law cannot eat the *pūrās* she has made and she sings :

I put the *pūrās* in my lap
When I bent to touch her feet,
A *pūrā* falls down, sisters.

A woman tells the brother of her husband like this:

O my brother-in-law! O my lover!
Birds have flown to Mandi
White rice is cooking in the Hāṇḍi
Eat a little rice with milk, O brother-in-law
O lover mine!
Birds have flown to Jeot
See my gleaming teeth and pink lips
Give me a kiss, O my brother-in-law!
O lover.

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When he goes and gets recruited in the army, he continues to cherish the love of his brother's wife and sends her letters and gifts:

Do not pine for me.

Do not grieve.

A sister sends messages to her brother asking him to come and meet her in her in-laws' house:

Brother, come and see me

....

In the courtyard there is the sound of somebody's stick and she is excited in anticipation:

What guest has come to-day?

It is my brother, my brother has come as a guest.

Ghiurs, get cooked soon!

and when he comes, she tells him:

My mother-in-law is a ball of fire

and my husband's sister is the lightning of the sky!

The brother finds his sister's lot unbearable. He returns to his mother, tells her about it and renounces the world. The mother advises him :

My son, you have become a jogi, but never go to your sister's place.

When a soldier goes on his service, he gives instructions to his mother about how his wife should be treated in his absence :

I am going on service, mother,

Keep your daughter-in-law happy

For yourself you may have plain *chappatis*

But give fried *pūris* to your daughter-in-law

You may sleep on a broken cot

But put a *palang* for your daughter-in-law

You may cover yourself with an old worn quilt

But get a new quilt for your daughter-in-law.

But in his absence the mother-in-law ill-treats her so badly that she dies. When the soldier comes back home and learns what had happened in his absence, he renounces the world. Other subjects of this nature are the feelings of a wife towards her husband, her complaints, her demands, her questions and so on. Some songs express her feelings when

HISTORY OF DŌGRĪ LITERĀTURĒ

the husband is away. There is a very sweet folk-song in the shape of a dialogue between a soldier returning home after twelve years, and his wife whom he meets at the village well and who does not recognise him. He had married her when she was a small girl before he got enlisted in the army and during these twelve years, she had grown up from a small girl to a young woman.

Khūhe par pānī bharendie kurie.

"You who are filling your vessel
at the well, fair one,
look likē the daughter of some rājā,
pour a little water for me to drink."

"I will not pour out of what I have filled,
O servant of the rājā
Fill yourself, drink yourself, O"

"What shall I use for a rope?
And what shall I use for a vessel?"

"Make a rope with your *pāṭṭis*, O rājā's servant,
Make the vessels of your eyes to fill,
O servant of the raja."

"May your pitcher break, as you go,
O daughter of the rājā.
May your pitcher-rest come in my hands,
O daughter of the rājā."

"May your mother die as you go, O rājā's servant.
May you fall into the hands of your Bhābīs,
O rājā's servant."

"May your mother die as you go, O daughter of the rājā
May you fall into my hands, O daughter of the rājā."

The mother-in-law asks the girl returning from the well :
Why did you take so long at the well,
my daughter-in-law?

She replies :

"There was a traveller there, my mother-in-law,
He picked up a quarrel with me, my mother-in-law."

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"What were his eyes like, my daughter-in-law?
What was his gait like?"

"His eyes were like the eyes of your daughter,
my mother-in-law,
His gait was like the gait of your son,
my mother-in-law."

"My son has returned home after twelve years,
my daughter-in-law,
Dress yourself to welcome him
O my daughter-in-law."

There is a song of a separated woman who writes to her husband to leave his job and come home.

Get yourself discharged and return home
and another insisting on him not to go:

I give grams to your horse to eat
Do not go away!
I will weave and you will wear
Do not go away!

You do not know about the affairs of other lands,
I will cook and you will eat
Do not go away!

After he is gone, she sings :

Like a fish suffering in shallow waters
The wife of a serviceman suffers at home!

LOVE-SONGS

Love which is rare in Bārs, is in abundance in songs, and in Dogri folk-songs of love, there is sweetness and beauty, an uninhibited pouring of the heart and lack of artifice and ostentation. Love rises like a spring from the Duggar soil with freshness and vigour. The love songs of Gaddis are heard in the upper ranges of Dhaulā Dhār, upper parts of Kangra and parts of Chambā. Love songs of Sajjan and Sajanī are sung in Riāsi, Kishtvād, Pādar and on the banks of the Chenāb. Similarly songs of Bhanwara, of Gorī, of Albelū, of Kuñjū and Chianchalo, of Banjārās, of the love of Chhambi and Rājā Amirchand, of Pānno Gujarī and Rājā of Guler, of the love of a Mian and the cobbler woman, of

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Phulmu, of Gaṅgī, of Lachhī and of the loves of Prithī Singh and Inder Dei and of Gilmū and Bhāgū are popular at various places of Duggar. A loose rendering of a few snatches of love songs of Duggar are given below:

*Nein kar gorie
mailiān akhiān,
Kalla pardesien tui ī bo jānā.*

Do not darken your eyes, O gori,
I am a pardesi and will leave tomorrow

*Channa mārhā charheā,
O Charheā Rajaauriā
Bani jāyeān pakkharū
Te mili jāyeān choriā.*

My moon has risen, in Rajaauri,
Take the shape of a bird,
Turn into a bird and come and meet me stealthily

Mane gī rakhanā nandā kanne.

Let the heart have its way, love,
Let not your mind sway in doubt

Bhanwarā O !

O bumble bee, lover of mine,
you make my heart yearn and pine
your turban is red, O love,
with a tuft of peacock feathers.

On the hill above, they sell Marinā,
Tell me honestly, my beloved from Pangī,
How can I live without you?

Suliā tangoi gai jān

My life is laid on thorns
Since I made your acquaintance
Every breath is a sigh of suffering
And home and hearth forgotten
Every minute is full of thoughts of you.

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*Tusen jo pyāriān naukariān, kumharwa
Asān jo pyariān sejān.*

You love service in the field, O Kumharu,
I love the lovers' bed

*Channā bo teri chānnanī
Tāreā bo terī lo!*

O moon, your moonlight!
O star, your starlight!
Gori goes stealthily for her love-tryst;
Go behind the clouds for a couple of hours

Why do you enquire of my caste now?
We have taken rice and milk from the same plate
Why do you enquire of my caste now?
You have your wives at home but come here

You have fallen in love with a Gujarī
O Gaibī, you have fallen in love with a Gujarī
You have your palaces but come here
You have fallen in love with this hut,
O Gaibi, you have fallen in love with a Gujarī

*Ajje dī rātīn, rouh, mere gadiā
ajje di rātin rouh!*

Tarry for tonight, O gaddi,
stay for tonight!
Leopards prowl in my fields in the night
And alone, I feel scared, O gaddi
stay for tonight

This side is my house and that side lies your house
and in between flows the river
People say Pannu is dark,
but my Pannu is a slice of pudding!

I wash clothes and I shed tears, O Kunju,
thoughts of you torture me

O miā Albeluā!
O miā Albeluā, get Ratnia's name registered
When you go to Dhārānagarī, bring a skirt for me!

SONGS OF PUBLICITY

In some Dogri folk-songs one finds the foot-steps of passing time and some strains of propaganda and publicity. We find a song of propaganda about Savings certificates. A woman asks her husband to get her ear-rings and a nose-ring with the money he has earned during his service in the army. But the husband tells her that if they save money and invest it in the Savings certificates, in twelve years' time, it will multiply one and a half times.

In twelve months, it becomes one and half times
Ten become fifteen
It will be useful for educating the son,
for his marriage,
And for purchasing a piece of land,
O Phulmu, my wife!

When the train came to the hills, songs about the trains got woven:

The train goes from village to village!

....

They have made a road of steel!

There is a song about use of Khādī and there is another dealing with the harmful effects of the habit of smoking:

Dholā, give up, please give up smoking
May the shops of this *Karār* be gutted
All my father-in-law's earning has gone to him!
Please give up, please give up smoking
May the earnings of the shopkeeper come to nought!
He made me sell the sapphire stone of my nose-ring
Please. . . .

It will be no wonder if somebody produces a folk-song about family planning, and it becomes popular soon. But such songs have no permanent foothold in the lives of the people because they are not born out of the hearts of the people. The songs which arise from the heart are made of different stuff and have deeper meaning and wider appeal, like the following:

If the husband dies, I can make do:
How is one to live if the lover dies?
If the robe is torn one can stitch it:
How is one to patch the tear of the skies?

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OF

The *pūnī* does not finish
The thread does not break!

OF

The moment of dusk when the day and night meet,
Dew of the morning,
Wave of the Gaṅgā,
Kumbhamelā—
My meeting you is like these,
A thing pre-ordained!

CHAPTER THREE

Dogri Writing before 1940: A Little-explored Field

I

THE early specimens of Dogri writing are to be found in rock and temple inscriptions, copper-plate inscriptions, rhapsodies in praise of rājās and their genealogical tables, title-deeds, *sanads*, agreements, letters and some Christian missionary literature. They are mostly in Ṭākārī script current in Duggar till the beginning of this century. No systematic search has yet been made for records and documents that may still be extant and scattered over the region except in respect of Chamba State where, thanks to the interest taken by Rājā Bhure Singh of Chamba and the work done by General Cunningham, Dr J. Hutchison and Dr J. Ph. Vogel, details of the material available have been catalogued.

INSCRIPTIONS

The oldest inscriptions found so far in Duggar are those of Pathiar (a small village 12 miles from Dharmasala) and Kaniara (four miles east of lower Dharmasala). The former dates back to the time of Mauryas in the 3rd century B.C. and records the dedication of a garden and a tank; the latter dates to Kushan period in the 2nd century A.D. and gives the

name of the 'garden of Krishna' on two massive granite blocks. Both give the legends in two scripts—Brāhmī from which all modern alphabets of North and Central India are derived and Kharoshthī written from right to left which was introduced by the Achaemenids into the North-west of India. The iron-pillar inscription of Sudh Mahadev temple in Jammu hills is also in Brāhmī script.

Panāli Nālā rock inscription (near Gun in the Lilh Pargana) of 6th century A.D., Meru Varman's inscriptions of A.D. 700, Baijnath temple inscriptions of A.D. 804, Yugakara Varman's copper-plate title-deeds in favour of Narsingh temple at Brahmaur of 10th century A.D., Devīkoṭhī fountain inscription of A.D. 1160, Mul-kihar fountain inscription of early 13th century A.D. and Vajreshwarī Devī temple inscription at Bhawan in Kangra dated somewhere between A.D. 1433 and 1446 are all in Sanskrit.

Introduction of Dogri, the vernacular spoken in Duggar, is first observed in the Salhi stone-inscription on the Sechu Nālā dated A.D. 1170. In the words of Dr J. Ph. Voghel, "the Salhi stone, the largest of its kind (6 ft. 6 in. high and 7 ft. wide) has carvings of various deities arranged in three rows, each figure being marked with an inscription showing the name of the deity in the vernacular spoken in the hills. The centre of the upper row is occupied by Siva with his trident, to his right are Varuṇa, the god of the waters and Gaṇesa; to his left Indra, the thunder-god, and the six-faced Kārttikeya. In the middle of the slab over the spout opening is a panel representing Vishṇu's sleep. The remaining eight figures are river-goddesses, all identical in attitude and attributes, and distinguished only by their vāhanas". These goddesses are Gaṅgā, Jamnā, Sindhū, Veth (Jhelam), Byās, Satluj, Rāvi and Chandrabhāgā. Nagahi fountain slabs of 11th century A.D. and the Sai fountain stone of Churah with an inscription dated A.D. 1168-69 also show a mixture of Sanskrit and Dogri-Pahari. Rājā Bhota Varman's four plates dated A.D. 1400 are in Ṭākārī. A temple inscription dated A.D. 1496 on an

old temple of Durgā Bhagwatī at Mahanpur, 15 miles to the west of Basohli in Jammu and Kashmir State is also in the local language. Lakshmī Nārāyaṇa temple founded in the 10th century A.D. is the chief temple of Chamba. It was renovated by Rājā Partap Singh (A.D. 1559-86) who issued two copper-plate inscriptions in 1582 mentioning that the temple was consecrated. One of these plates commences in the local language thus: "*Shri samvat 58 Baishākh praviṣṭe 9 Shri bare Nārāyaṇe de dehrai pratishṭhā hoi.*" Platform inscription on the outskirts of Chamba town on the road to Sarol, dated A.D. 1660 (1717 Vikramī) is also in Ṭākari.

COPPER-PLATES

Copper-plates of Chamba rājās issued between A.D. 1500 and 1700 contain many Dogri passages. The passages where boundaries of granted lands are described are mostly in Dogri. These bhāṣhā portions contain numerous geographical and agricultural terms which are peculiarly native. There are 42 copper-plates of Rājā Balabhadra (A.D. 1589-1640). One of these copper-plates dated A.D. 1595 mentions the consecration of a temple of Gopāl, the cowherd God Krishna. This temple, known as the temple of Bansīgopāl, is in the vicinity of the palace and the passage runs in Dogri thus: "*Shri Divāne Gopāl re dehre pratishṭhā kirāi*". Another temple at Chamba dedicated to Rādhākrishṇa by Sādhā, the Rānī of Rājā Jit Singh, has a vernacular inscription showing that it was consecrated in 1882 Vikramī or A.D. 1825.

RHAPSODIES

Mention of two rhapsodies is found in the Kangra District Gazetteer—Rhapsodies of Manak Chand (A.D. 1565) and those of Gambhir Rai (A.D. 1650). The former describe the reign of Rājā Rup Chand of Kangra (A.D. 1360-88) and the siege of Kangra fort by Feroz Tughlaq:

Rup Chandra bharkar charho!

Dileshwar Surtan

DOGRI WRITING BEFORE 1940

Bahut hetkar pagpari pith hath lai san.

Rup Chandra went forth to meet the Sultan, lord of Delhi and bowed very low down to his feet, the King put his hand on his back.

Gambhir Rai's rhapsodies describe the warlike exploits of Rājā Jagat Singh of Nurpur who had been very close to Jehangir and Nur Jehan and who died in A.D. 1646. The poem is in the folk style of a Bār:

Jagata Rājā, bhagata Rājā, Bāsdev kā-Jāyā

Sindu Mare, Sāgar Mare, Himāchal ḍerā pāyā.

Akas ko arba kītā, tān Jagata kahāyā.

He conquered the country beyond the Indus, he pitched his camp in the snow mountains and pointed his gun towards heaven, therefore he was called Jagata.

Some other rājās of Duggar may also have had court poets to sing their praises. Before Jagat Singh, there was his father Bās Dev, a great Rājā mentioned in *Akbarnāmāh*. There were Rājās of Jammu and Basohli and Chamba and Kangra and Guler and Jaswan. Some research may reveal existence of more rhapsodies and names of some authors of popular Bārs.

CHRONICLES OF RAJAS

Existence of Bansaulīs or Rajaulīs—chronicles of rājās—of Guler, Kotla, Kangra, Suket, Mandi and Kalhur has been mentioned in gazetteers. Chronicle of Guler, known as *Dilīparañjanī*, was written in A.D. 1705, during the reign of Rājā Dalip Singh. It is not known as to when the Ṭākārī history of Mandi and the Suket chronicle were composed. *Rajaulī* was written in the court of Rājā Dhyan Singh of Kotla who was a contemporary of Rājā Sansarchand of Kangra some time in the latter half of the 18th century A.D. It is a translation of a Persian work of history, in a simple style of Dogri. A passage runs like this :

Je Bhukkhā dā roṭiā sāria dī, bhukkh hoī, hor addhi

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mile tān rajjī jandā. Hor rajyādā sārā sansār āye tān bī bhukkhā rehnda, tiski bhukkh nayin lālasā hai, hiras hai.

To a hungry man, even half a bread will suffice to satisfy his hunger. But for one not really hungry, even the whole world is not enough to satisfy his hunger. This is not hunger; this is desire, this is craving.

The exact date of writing of Vansāvalī of Kangra rājās which gives 500 names and mentions that the founder rājā Bhumchand sprang from the perspiration on the brow of the goddess of Kangra is also not known, but it was seen by William Moorecroft at the court of Rājā Sansarchand in A.D. 1820. Historical record of Rājās of Kalhur is contained in *Banswara*, compiled under the direct supervision of Rājā Hirachand, by men of learning in the state of Kalhur and it was printed at Bilaspur in A.D. 1882 (Sambat 1939). *Gulāb Nāmā* which gives the genealogy of Jammu rājās was written in Persian which was the court language of Mahārājā Ranjit Singh, the patron of Mahārājā Gulab Singh of Jammu, and was considered superior to Dogri, and a Dogri translation of this has been done only recently.

AGREEMENTS, LETTERS AND TITLE-DEEDS

Numerous *sanads*, letters, agreements and title-deeds of rājās of Duggar are available which show that although Sanskrit was considered the language of scholarship and literature and Persian the language of communication from and with governments outside Duggar, Dogri was the language of official business and private and official correspondence within Duggar. A few *sanads*, letters, agreements and title-deeds written in Tākārī are preserved in Chamba museum. Some of these are listed below :

- (i) Agreement in Tākārī between Rājā Raj Singh of Chamba (A.D. 1764-94) and Rājā Fateh Pal of Bhadrawah, setting out conditions under which Fateh Pal was made Rājā of Bhadrawah.
- (ii) Letter from Rājā Brajraj Dev of Jammu to Rājā

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Raj Singh conveying to him the paraganas of Jundh, Bhalai, Bhandal Kihar and Diur dated A.D. 1781.

- (iii) Title-deed dated A.D. 1782 in local dialect in Tākari characters by which Rājā Raj Singh confers the pargana of Dhundhi on his Wazir Zorawar in recognition of his services in Junda in connection with the war between Chamba and Basohli which ended in conquest of Basohli by Rājā Raj Singh in A.D. 1782.
- (iv) Letter in Tākari from Rani of Bilaspur to Rājā Raj Singh asking for his help and protection for her infant son Maha Chand dated 1782-83.
- (v) Sanad in Tākari from Rājā Braja Raj Dev of Jammu to Rājā Rāj Singh restoring the parganas mentioned in (ii) above dated A.D. 1783.
- (vi) Agreement in Tākari between Rājā Raj Singh of Chamba and Rājā Daya Pal of Bhadrawah similar to (i) above. No date given.
- (vii) Agreement in Tākari by which Rājā Bhup Chand of Bhadrawah promises to remain faithful and tributary to Rājā Jit Singh of Chamba (A.D. 1794 to 1808).
- (viii) Letter in Tākari from Rājā Pritam Singh of Kulu to Rājā Jit Singh of Chamba promising assistance in an united attack on Kangra, dated A.D. 1801.
- (ix) Letter in Tākari from Rājā Jit Singh of Chamba to Rājā Tej Singh of Kishtwar dated A.D. 1803, the tenor of the letter implying that Kishtwar was subject to Chamba. It stated that if Kishtwar is invaded, Chamba will send a force and Kishtwar must help if Chamba is at war with another power.
- (x) Treaty in Tākari between Rājā Sansarchand of Kangra and Rājā Jit Singh of Chamba (A.D. 1803).
- (xi) Letter in Tākari from Rājā Gulab Singh of Jammu to Rājā Charhat Singh promising help in connection with Rājā Bir Singh of Nurpur dated A.D. 1827.

A gift-deed of Rājā Ranjit Deo of Jammu (A.D. 1750-81)

bestowing a piece of land on a temple has also been found. It runs thus :

Shri Rāmaji Sahaī—patā mahārājā Ranjit Deo, Jambu nareshaji de bachanen. Ai Pramāṇa Malu Badagotrā Bāsī Jammu gī likhī dittā. Shri Thākar duāre dekanne gaihr ghamān attha keran boone ālī bhoomi karī dittī. Gaihr thākaren dī bhenṭā kītā.

Several title-deeds, State proclamations and orders of the 19th century have been preserved. They give examples of Dogri of this period. A plate issued by Rājā Jit Singh of Jammu (early 19th century) reads thus :

Shri Rāmaji—Paṭā likheā saha pramāṇa Shri Mahārāje Shri Rājā Shri Jeet Singh jīde bachanen mien Mote hathen Shri Pandit Prushottama ki paṭā likhī dittā. Parganā Jammu tappa galla bich grān ek ṭhande padr guren dī bheṭa kītī es gran dī poonda son poonda saba kichha pandit horen khānī. Shri Mahārājaji kī shīrā-bāda karde rauhna. ?..''

In this plate Mahārājā Jeet Singh bestows a village land on Pandit Purshottam in the name of Rāma and under seal of authority, enjoining that the produce of the land should be taken by the pandit who should bless the Mahārājā.

A private letter from a father to his son dated A.D. 1860 (1916 Sambat) commences thus :

Chiranjīva Mian Sonuji di Jammu thuān Bhūpsinghe ne shubh bachanan Likhi. Shri Raghunāthaji ithe uthe apanī kirpā banāi rakhan. Agge samachar eh ai ka Nathu Chārake de hatthen panj sau sattu bheje he so kosha bich tārī karī samāchār bhejanā . . .

Bhup Singh sends his good wishes from Jammu to the long-lived Mian Sonu. May Shri Raghunath (the God) bestow his grace and favour here and also there. Rs. 570, which were sent through Nathu Charak, should be deposited in the treasury under intimation. . . .

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A letter from a wife from Jammu to her husband who was probably in the employ of the Mahārājā at Srinagar in Kashmir runs thus :

Swasti. Shri Parmesren tull soāmijī dāsī Godāvarī dā jathājog charanbandanā te sukh sānd bāchanājī. Ithen sab sukh ai, tusārā sukh sānd ghare bich Thāgaren kashā sadā gai mangde hain. Horji tusārā sukhsānd mate chire dā mileā nein ai, sabanen gī baṛi chintā hoā kardī ai. Pūre traūn mheenen kashā koī patrī tusen likhī nein. Be hor te buā hor suddhi nhaune āste chaūn rojen dī ṭurī gai diān na bich eh patrakā panten de jāgate kolā lakhāī dittī. Horji apanā sukhsānd mheenen bich ek bārī likhanā mane dī chintā maṭānī.

Swasti. My God-like husband! Your slave-girl Godavari touches your feet and sends the news of her well-being. Everybody is all right here and we here always pray to God to keep you always well. No news has come from you for a long time and everybody is worried. You have not written a single letter for the last three months. It is now four days since your mother and aunt left for Suddhi for a sacred bath. In the meantime I have got this letter written by the Pandit's son. Please write about your well-being once a month to relieve us of anxiety.

There is need for a systematic collection, classification and publication of old specimens of Dogri writing in inscriptions, title-deeds, proclamations, agreements and letters. The last mentioned genre particularly is expected to provide interesting and useful material. Muhafizakhānā of Jammu and Kashmir State and houses of other rājās of Duggar and some prominent families should prove valuable sources. Diwan Narsingh Das Nargis of Jammu has collected some letters for his Urdu books on Mahārājā Gulab Singh and History of Jammu and Sri D.C. Prashant has quoted some in his research article on Dogri prose published by Dogri Research Institute, Jammu, in *Nibandhāvali*. It is hoped that the Jammu and Kashmir Cultural Academy or Dogri Research

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Institute or Dogri Samsthā of Jammu will bring out blunche of letters of the 19th century, the 18th century and even of earlier periods. These will show not only the shape of the language in those periods but also the style of writing and the mores and values and events in the lives of the people.

In 1818, Christian missionaries of Sirampur published a Dogri translation of the New Testament from their press. This was the first printed book in Dogri in Tākārī script published till then. The book contains 361 leaves and each page has 28 lines. The hand-made paper on which the book has been printed is losing colour and the only copy of the book available is with the Sirampur Mission. A small amount of literature in Chameālī in Tākārī script was printed at Ludhiana also around A.D. 1900. It consisted of Gospels of Mathew, Mark, John and Luke, the Sermon on the Mount and the Ten Commandments.

2

Duggar has had a long and uninterrupted tradition of serious writing in Sanskrit. In later periods fashions of writing in Braja Bhāshā, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu came into vogue in different periods. But Dogri, the mother-tongue of the people was not considered a fit vehicle for literary exercise for a long time, although the Rājās of Duggar country were using Dogri in Tākārī script for official business from the 14th and 15th centuries onwards. Composition in Dogri was at best a casual diversion, results of which were appropriated by the folk tradition. Whatever was composed in the shape of a book came to be written in Sanskrit or Braja Bhāshā or Persian or Urdu. Thus, books on the science of Astrology and books like *Krishṇa Mahima Stotra* came to be written in Sanskrit; *Vīravilāsa* and *Nīti Vinod* came to be written in Braja Bhāshā; *Gulāb Nāmā* was written in Persian and *Tārīkh-e-Rājgān-e-Jammu* came to be written in Urdu.

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Braja Bhāshā came to Duggar with the Krishnalīlā theme so exquisitely and passionately woven in the Pahārī Schools of Painting which flourished in Jammu, Kangra, Basohli, Guler, Nurpur and Chambā. Dogra Rājās enjoyed playing Krishna to their numerous Rānīs and maids and to hear the sweet songs of Braja Bhāshā to the accompaniment of their pleasures and the court-poets won favours and awards by composing and writing poems in the languid language of the land of Krishna and Rādhā and the gopīs. During the 17th and the 18th centuries Rājās Sangram Pal, Kripal Pal and Amrit Pal of Basohli, Rājās Roopchand, Man Singh and Goverdhanchand of Guler, Rājās Ranjitdev and Brajarajdev of Jammu and Rājā Sansarchand of Kangra provided patronage not only to Generals, Vaidyas and Jyotishīs but also to painters and poets. Not much is yet known about the literary creations of those times except that in Basohli during the reign of Kripalpal, Pahda Srikant wrote in Sanskrit on *Sushruta-* and *Charaka-samhita* and during the reign of Rājā Amritpal, Pandit Srikant Jyotishi prepared an almanac in Hindi which became very popular not only in Duggar, but also in the Punjab. About the same time, in Bhaddu, at the temple of Sukrālādevī there were poets who wrote verses in Braja Bhāshā. Prof. Gauri Shanker has made a mention of them in his book *Kavi Dutta Granthāvalī*. Shivanandan mentioned therein was a contemporary of Raja Umed Singh of Chamba who was cured by Shivanandan with Tantra Vidya and who built the temple of Sukrālā Bhagavatī at the request of his benefactor. During the reign of Rājā Ranjit Dev of Jammu there was Kavi Dattu who is reported to be the author of three Sanskrit works and ten works in Braja Bhāshā: *Krishnamahastotra*, *Krishnashtaka* and *Sayampanchta* in Sanskrit and *Vīravilāsa*, *Brajarajapanchaśikā*, *Bārāhmāh*, *Dattasangraha*, *Amritaviyoga*, *Raghuchandrikā*, *Jyotishaprakasha*, *Rituvarnana*, *Gopiviyoga* and *Kamalanetrastotra* in Braja Bhāshā. Of these, *Vīravilāsa*, *Brajarājapanchaśikā* and *Bārāmāh* have been published in *Kavi Dutta Granthāvalī*.

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Shivaram, the son of Dattu's younger brother, was also a poet of Braja Bhāshā. His sons Trilochan and Rudra Dutt and the grandson of Dattu, Vidyanidhi, were also poets of Braja Bhāshā who lived during the reign of Mahārāja Ranbir Singh of Jammu. Trilochan translated *Shanti Parva* of Mahabharata under the title *Niti Vinod*. During the reign of Mahārāja Ranbir Singh and Mahārāja Pratap Singh in Jammu, several books in Sanskrit are reported to have been written. In the court of Mahārāja Ranbir Singh, there were more than a dozen Sanskrit scholars like Gopalram, Chandi Das, Dina Nath, Viswarup, Nidhipati, Neelkanth, Ganesh Daivagya, Mahesh Viswēswar, Sarveshwar, Kasinath Shastri, Gokulchandra, Gangadhar and Govindacharya. The Raghunath Pathasala of Jammu has about 4,500 Sanskrit manuscripts. This tradition is being carried on even now by Sanskrit scholars like Shukdev, Pandit Ramkishan, Kedarnath Shastri and Kakaram Shastri. The tradition of literary composition in Braja Bhāshā which later on changed to that of Hindi or Khaṛī Bolī is also continuing and many Dogras are writing in Hindi. Several writers of Dogri to-day have that tradition in their bones.

During the 18th and the 19th centuries when the Moghul empire disintegrated and the Sikhs rose to power, Punjabi came into prominence in the plains of the Punjab. During the reign of Rājā Ranjit Dev of Jammu, many Hindu and Muslim families from the Punjab came and settled in Jammu, Basohli, Jasrota and Akhnoor. During the rule of Rājā Sansarchand in Kangra, Punjabi families came and settled in Kangra also. In the beginning of the 19th century, Mahārāja Ranjit Singh established his sovereignty over Jammu and Kangra and many Punjabi officers and representatives of the Lahore Government came to the Dogra country. Many Dogras joined Ranjit Singh's forces and his Court. Prominent among the latter were the three Dogra brothers from Jammu, Gulab Singh, Dhyan Singh and Suchet Singh, who rose to high positions in the Lahore Court of Ranjit Singh. They learnt to

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speaking Punjabi and when Gulab Singh returned to Jammu as the Rājā of Jammu, he brought with him many Punjabi officers, whom he appointed to high positions. Among these were the Prime Minister Devan Jwala Sahai and other ministers, Devan Harichand, Devan Nihal Singh, Govind Sahai and Devan Kirparam. During the reign of Mahārāja Ranbir Singh of Jammu, there was heavy influx of Punjabis in various Govt. Departments and schools in the State. There was hardly any district without a Punjabi officer, Punjabi teacher, Punjabi clerk, Punjabi Patwari and Punjabi police official. With them came Punjabi folk-tales like those of Hir Rānjah, Rūp Basant, Pūrāṇa Bhakta and Sassi Punnu. Some literary activity in Punjabi also came into vogue and some people in Jammu wrote poems in Punjabi. Mohommad Baksh of Mirpur composed *Kissa Saifulmaluk Badiul Jamāl Pari* in verse. The official language of Jammu court, however, continued to be Dogri and Mahārāja Ranbir Singh got some improvements made in its script Tākārī.

When Mahārāja Pratap Singh came to the throne of Jammu & Kashmir State (A.D. 1890), Dogri was replaced by Urdu as the official language and Urdu became the medium of instruction in schools and also in official correspondence. Dogri suffered a heavy decline and in a few generations it came to be almost forgotten. On the other hand, Punjabi and writings in Punjabi became more popular. During the reign of Mahārāja Pratap Singh, Lala Ramdhan of Akhnoor and Dasmal of Jammu City were very popular poets of Punjabi. Dasmal wrote a lot in Punjabi and his verse compositions entitled *Rūp Basant*, *Narasī Bhakta*, *Dhannā Jatta*, *Pendū Jattī*, *Sahukār*, *Krishṇa Janma* and *Sītā Banawās* became quite popular. A number of young people acknowledged him as their master and learnt from him how to compose poetry. Among these were Sardar Gyan Singh, Bholā Bhakta, Pāppī, Isāī, Khamosh, Madahosh, Gopal Dhavan, Chamanlal Josh, Tirathram Tarkash, Madan Sarkash, Jaswant Singh Shamsheer, Chunnilal Kamla, Jagannath Bhatt and Kashinath

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Bakshi. Another popular Punjabi poet of Jammu at that time was Gosain Tarachand who had his pupils at Jammu and Sialkot. He translated *Bhagawad Gītā* in Punjabi verse and wrote hundreds of poems, Dohas and Kafis. Till 1940, Punjabi poetry in Jammu written in Persian script enjoyed great popularity and by this time *Ṭākārī* had been completely forgotten by the local people. *Tawi*, the Prince of Wales College magazine, had a Punjabi section till 1947, but it had no Dogri section. In the other parts of Duggar also, the medium of instruction and official business being Urdu, knowledge of *Ṭākārī* declined. In Chamba, the use of *Ṭākārī* continued a little longer and the Rājā of Chamba got *Ṭākārī* letters set in type, but there also its use decreased and the use of Urdu instead increased. During the first 40 years of this century, the languages employed for writing were generarally Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi or English. Dogri in *Ṭākārī* disappeared from the literary scene completely and it came to be considered as the language of the rural, illiterate and backward classes of Dogra society.

3

Apathy of the elite and the educated classes of Duggar towards their mother-tongue during the 150 years before 1940 is responsible to a great extent for the absence of any literary activity in Dogri and loss of whatever manuscripts in Dogri may have existed. Some work of Dattu who lived in the second half of the 18th century has, however, come down to us. He is reported to have written not only in Sanskrit and Braja Bhāshā, but in Dogri also. He was a Kathā-Vāchak Brahmin poet of Bhaddū who received patronage from Mahārāja Ranjit Dev and Brajarajdev of Jammu, Rāja Prithvipal of Bhaddū and Rāja Amritpal of Basohli. His compositions in Braja Bhāshā contained many Dogri words, as for example, *pora*, *makhīr*, *bhaṭhorā*, which are typically Dogri. In

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Vīravilāsa, many Dogri words have been used: *Kharoī, Lāna-lage, Sarātā, Nakāre, Nerai, Marukari, Masosata, Ane, Sansā, Jhigare, Chhurkaī, Rākhī, Tāī, Dahi, Palesa, Surata*, etc.

Braja Rāj Panchāsika has been composed in Braja Bhāshā, but the poet has incorporated two Dogri poems of eight lines each in the body of the poem. One is spoken by the Katoch Rajputs and the other by the women of Haripur. When the forces of Braja Raj cross the Ravi and reach Machhi Bhaun, the men of Kangra speak thus:

*Tad-dhanhi bajhoora asan jehlum chambyawala
Khūssayā Pathyara matto keetiji gualāndī
Macchī bhaunā ai bounhdī faujā Jammuālādi.*

It was foolish on the part of Chamba to have snatched Pathyar. The forces of Jammu have already reached Machhi Bhauna on their march.

After his success in his campaign, when Braja Raj returns, the women of Haripur begin to prepare themselves for welcoming the soldiers of the campaign. The feelings of the women who were anxious to meet their husbands are delineated in these eight lines:

*Thande thande pānī jinhen peete barfānī bhalo,
Tauhiyā dā pānī huna chetai kusa aundā.
Miṭṭhe chūpe jinhe amba chhaila panjālaide
Kuthe kharbuja huna tinde mana bhaundā.
Likhī likhī thakke nainā pakke rāha dikkhī dikkhī
Dutta bhane naun -e saila chhoṛi, kuna aundā.
Pei barsānta phirī unde mana santa bhalo
Asen bakhi kaiski tusādā mana aundā.*

How will they who have enjoyed waters of the snowfed streams relish the waters of the Tawi now?

How will they who have enjoyed mangoes of Panjala relish the watermelons of Kandī now?

We are tired of writing letters and our eyes are sore with watching the path of their return.

But how will they who are tasting new pleasures come back?

Rains have set in, kindling memories in our hearts

Why should not your thoughts turn towards us?

The poem of Dattu, however, which is the most popular in Duggar is entitled *Sikha deyān mikī Devīdittā*.

Here the feelings of the bride who has come to her in-laws' house at Gangatha and who is subjected to comments and criticism of her ways by her in-laws and her helplessness have been described sensitively. Dattu was a poet of Vira Rasa and Bhakti Rasa and it is possible he might have composed many more poems in Dogri. He was the first Dogri writer to write Dogri in Devanagari script.

4

Information about the existence during the 19th century of at least five poets who wrote occasionally in Dogri also, in the tradition of Dattu, is available. The poets were Shivaram, the son of Dattu's younger brother Nandu, Trilochan and Rudra Dutta, both sons of Shivaram, Vidyanidhi, a grandson of Dattu and Gangaram. Shivaram was a temple-priest of Sukrālādevi of Bhaddu. Only one of his poems has come down to us. It has been published in the collection of poems called *Nihārikā*, brought out by the Jammu and Kashmir Academy. It is a poem in praise of Goddess Sukrālā in which the poet has incorporated some Braja Bhāshā words like *Dinesha*, *Suresha*, *Rajesh* and *Mahesh* changing *sh* into *sa*, and giving them local flavour.

Dattu had written *Vīravilāsa*, an adaptation of the Drona Parva of the *Mahābhārata*. Following in his footsteps, Trilochan wrote *Nīti Vinod*, an adaptation of Shanti Parva of the *Mahābhārata*. The book was written by him at the instance of Mahārāja Ranbir Singh. None of his Dogri compositions has come to light so far. But a Dogri poem of Rudradutt describing the affluence of trade in the reign of Mahārāja Ranbir Singh has been described. It also finds place in *Nihārikā*. Not much is known about the literary works of Vidyanidhi but Gangaram is reported to have been a

scholar of Sanskrit and Braja Bhāshā who was respected not only in the Jammu court, but also in the courts of Kangra and Mandi. He wrote a book called *Ranvir Prāyaschit* which runs into 1000 pages. A Dogri poem of his called 'Life in the Kanḍī' describes the daily chores of a young woman of the Kanḍī in simple and touching lines :

Ekkai galla sachaidī, sai lāriā galāi ditiī
sabanen thon kachā loko, kanḍiā dā bassanā. . . .

Truly has the daughter-in-law said that the life in Kanḍī is the worst. How is one to spin when all the time is taken up in guarding the crop of *bājrā* (a coarse grain), warding off cattle and sparrows? Whom is one to tell the misery of breaking the feet over the stones while going down the hill to fetch water and climbing up. Daily the calves have to be given water to drink and I have to get up at midnight to grind the corn!

Unlike these five poets, there was Lakkhu, a true son of the soil, uneducated and devoid of scholarship and a carpenter by profession. He lived in the early half of the 19th century and started writing Dogri verse-riddles for the pleasure of his wife. It is said that he was in love with an intelligent and pretty girl of the village. The girl also loved him and they wanted to marry each other. But the girl's father put one condition to the marriage. He said that Lakkhu could marry his daughter if he struck seven times on a piece of wood at the same place. Lakkhu stood by the side of the log with an axe in his hand thinking as to how to fulfil the condition. While the girl's father went inside the house to pull on his 'hukka', the girl saw Lakkhu at his wits' end and passing by his side on the pretext of going to the well to fetch water, whispered the following couplet to Lakkhu :

Sikkh tarkhān kī buddhī
Chhe puṭṭhiyan te ek siddhī

Learn the skill of the carpenter—strike six times with the blunt side of the axe and then once with the sharp side.

Lakkhu got his girl but she would not give him food until he composed some interesting riddle to please her.

Thus, Lakkhu got into composing riddles. Since nobody could be called a poet unless he wrote in Braja Bhāshā, Lakkhu tried his hand at composing riddles in Braja Bhāshā also. Six riddles in Dogri, two in Braja Bhāshā and two poems of Lakkhu have been published in an article by the late Charan Singh in the June 1966 issue of *Shirāzā*.

Mention has already been made of Christian missionary literature and Dogri letters, agreements, *sanads*, proclamations issued during this century. Mahārāja Ranbir Singh of Jammu and Rājās of Chamba got some improvements made in the Ṭākārī script current in Jammu and Chamba respectively. About this time, some Sanskrit books were also translated into Dogri. Grierson in his *Linguistic Survey of India* has mentioned that Bühler who compiled a catalogue of manuscripts in Sanskrit, made a mention of the existence of a Dogri translation of *Līlavatī*, a Sanskrit treatise on Mathematics. During the time of Mahārāja Ranbir Singh again, Choudhury Kanhayalal of village Mahanpur wrote a book in Dogri on Land Settlement. Mahārāja Ranbir Singh also got a book called *Vyavahāra Gītā* and a Drill for the Army written in Dogri.

In 1890, a Dogri newspaper called *Dogrā Mīttar* came out from Jammu. It was edited by Pt. Durga Prasad Misra. The publication of the paper was soon stopped because of the involvement of Sri Durga Prasad in connection with a conspiracy against Mahārāja Pratap Singh about his alleged dealings with Russia. No information about the details of the newspaper or any copy of the newspaper is available at this distant date.

The examples of Dogri prose of the 19th century show that there is preponderance of Sanskrit and Hindi words and Urdu and Persian words are totally absent. They also show that Dogri could serve adequately as a medium for Mathematics, Drill, Rules of Conduct, Official proclamations and orders, trade, newspapers and official and private correspondence. The style is simple and functional.

In the beginning of this century, Lala Rāmadhana, Dāsmal and Hardatt Sastri wrote poems in Dogri. Ramadhana was a poet who wrote in Urdu, Punjabi and Persian besides Dogri and Dāsmal wrote in Punjabi and Dogri, more in Punjabi than in Dogri and Hardatt wrote in Hindi, Punjabi and Dogri.

The best known Dogri poem of Rāmadhana is entitled 'Channe dī chānanī channe kane', which has been published in *Nihārikā*, a collection of Dogri poems. The poem has four stanzas, each complete in itself and yet all the four are joined by the common refrain *Channe dī chānanī channe kane*, common meter and the common theme of the tortuous course of love and its pain and predicaments. The theme of love runs through all the four stanzas like the soul of the poem and while at places, it is apparent, at other places it runs imperceptibly. Like the moonlight which cannot be separated from the moon, the beloved cannot be separated from her lover :

*Dikkhī lai Rāmadhanā preete dī reetāgī
Latakanā kachiā tandā kane*

*Aun terī tūn merā hoī gayā
Sukhe Dukhe change-mande kane
Danā bhara kusegi mandānī bolana
Channe dī channānī chande kane*

See, Ramadhana, the way of the lovers!
It is like hanging by a slender unspun thread
I am yours and you have become mine
For joy and suffering, in prosperity and adversity.
One should not hurt anyone by word of mouth
Moonlight is inseparable from the Moon.

By falling in love, she becomes involved with and subject to others, and has to do the domestic chores but it cannot be

helped, because the light of the moon is with the moon. It shines equally on lakes and deserts. The insinuations, caustic comments, criticisms, complaints of the mother-in-law have to be put up with. It cannot be helped because light of the moon is with the moon. Her love has made her mad and people think that some ghost has entered her, but this is not the fact. It is her lover, the flute-player Krishna who has made her mad and who has plundered, broken, uprooted and left her as she is, and without Him her life is unbearable, but why blame anybody for that. It is part of the game and the light of the moon goes with the moon.

Dasmul is reported to have composed some songs in Dogri, but it has not been possible to lay hands on any of them.

Hardatt's Dogri poems have been published in two parts of Dogri *Bhajanmālā* and a few selected poems have been republished in *Nihārikā*. Hardatt's Hindi poems have been published by the Venkateshwara Press of Bombay in a book entitled *Bhagawat Padi*. The Dogri poems written for the purpose of being sung have been modelled on some popular Dogri and Punjabi folk-songs. Three or four subjects are prominent in these poems—the deteriorating condition of India and Duggar, the social evils of Duggar, the curse of changing times and devotion to God. The poems have behind them the sentiments and feelings of a reformer, an underlying note of revolt and exhortation and a tinge of irony, i. e., humour born out of commiseration. The language used is idiomatic, effective and appropriate to the subjects. In some poems, the poet appears to be rather orthodox and backward looking, that is, sorry at the disappearance of old traditions of worship, recitation of old scriptures, performance of rituals and ceremonies and so on and he is annoyed at the onrush of new fashions.

In the poem entitled 'Unemployment', the poet deplores the deterioration in Indian industry and trade and the resultant unemployment.

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This country was a mine of gold once,
to-day she stands helpless.
We have nothing of our own make,
all the money goes out.

The poet is sorry to see the deteriorating state of affairs in his own community and questions as to how Dogra country will survive when other communities and countries are progressing but Dogras are shrinking in their shell, and do not bestir themselves.

In another poem, he points to the evils of untouchability:

If the hem of her garment touches an untouchable,
she will bathe with clothes on!

In the poem entitled 'Dogrā Dēsh', he points out the superstitions current in Duggar—beliefs in ghosts and the evil eye and the crude ways of exorcising ghosts. In another poem entitled 'Khajjal Khoariān' he satirizes ill-matched marriages, where a sixty year old, toothless man marries a girl of tender age and the foolish fondness of the Dogra mother who prays for her son's marriage and does not bother about his education. The evils of litigation have been treated in detail in his poem 'Dālatī-dā Dhandhā'. His description of corrupt officials looking for bribes is very sharp and incisive. They pounce upon the prospective litigator like a swarm of bees and denude him of everything. The poems entitled 'Kalajuge di Mehma', 'Fashion', 'Huna nama Jamana Aya' and 'Khajjal Khoariān' deal with new vogues in social behaviour, dress and make up and their effects on social values. The views of the poet are old-fashioned but they represent the initial reaction of a priest-ridden orthodox society to winds of change that swept over the towns of Duggar in the early years of this century. In the poem 'Krishnaji gī Dharatī dā Snehā', the poet complains to Lord Sri Krishna about the rot in the world. In the poem entitled 'Lankā Terī Nainyo Bachanī', the poet has picked up an incident from the *Rāmāyana* to illustrate impermanence of power and the dangers facing Rājās and kings who fail to see the writing on the wall.

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Specimens of Dogri prose as spoken in the beginning of this century in different parts of Duggar are found recorded in Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India* and Rev. T. Grahame Bailey's articles on these spoken languages given in the relevant State gazetteers. Grierson's *Survey* has passages giving translation of a portion of the story of the Prodigal Son in Dogri and various other dialects spoken in Duggar, besides other examples. They are all in Tākārī.

Dogri translation of *Śrīmad Bhagawad Gītā*, published in October 1934, is, however, in Devanāgarī script. The publication of this book is important in the history of development of both Dogri language and Dogri literature; it was the first regular attempt to write Dogri prose in Devanāgarī script and as stated by Dr A.C. Woolner, the then Vice-Chancellor of the Punjab University, in his Foreword to the book, it pointed to the literary potentialities of Dogri. Dr Woolner had not seen any literary work in Dogri before and he saw the use of the language for purposes of literature in this book for the first time. The Dogri translation of the *Gītā* in this book, if compared with the Dogri translation of the *New Testament*, would reveal interesting information. There is a difference of 116 years between these two publications. The earlier book is a book of Christian religion translated by the missionaries and printed in Tākārī script, while the latter publication is a book of Hindu religion translated by a Sanskrit scholar and printed in Devanāgarī script.

Dogri Gītā by Prof. Gauri Shankar is in the shape of a pocket book and consists of 204 pages, with original Sanskrit ślokas on the top in bold letters and their Dogri prose renderings in smaller letters below them. At some places each sloka has been translated separately, while at other places, two to three ślokas have been taken together for translation. The translation contains many Sanskrit words, some in the pure Sanskrit form and others in their deformed local forms. This is natural in a translation like this. Sanskrit words have been combined nicely with the Dogri words so as to appear

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to be part of Dogri idioms. This is clear from a reading of certain ślokas like the eighth śloka of the eighth canto of the *Gītā*. The traditions of Hindu Dharma and ritualism and of Sanskrit and Braja-Bhāshā have become so much a part of Dogra life that Sanskrit words do not appear to be foreign in Dogri context. This translation shows that Dogri language could enrich itself by borrowing words from Sanskrit.

The translation, however, suffers from some shortcomings like the following:

- (i) Some Sanskrit and Hindi words used in the translation could have been substituted by pure Dogri words. It appears that the writer has not applied himself in this regard. Dogri has a peculiar idiom of its own and that the translator does not appear to have been able to get that natural idiom in his rendering.
- (ii) More than one form of the same word has been used. The writer could have taken a little more pains to preserve uniformity in the use of words. For example, *hundī* and *hondī*, *yukta* and *jugata*, *prāpta* and *prāpata*, *rādhana* and *ārāadhanā*.
- (iii) At some places, influence of Punjabi is pronounced. This is due to the educated Dogras having close contact with the Punjabis in their educational institutions making for a blurring of distinction between the pronunciation of certain words, e.g., *vich* and *vinā* for *bich* and *binā*, *pher* for *phirī* or *bhirī*.
- (iv) Translation of some Sanskrit words is loose and careless.

In spite of these shortcomings, the publication of the book stands as a testimony to the writer's faith in and love for his mother-tongue because at that time there was little prospect of a literary future for Dogri language as stated by Dr Woolner.

CHAPTER FOUR

Dogri Writing of the Forties: Years of Incubation

I

THE waves of renaissance which inspired the growth and development of regional languages and literatures in the rest of India reached Jammu city in the early forties and gave rise to a movement which took up the task of putting together the extant threads of Dogri writing and building on their foundations the edifice of Dogri literature.

In Duggar, Jammu city has always occupied a place of importance and during the reigns of Maharaja Ranjit Dev in the 18th century and of Mahārāja Ranbir Singh during the 19th century, Indian and Dogra culture and literature had received patronage at the Jammu Court where men of learning, scholars, poets, painters, artists, soldiers and other men with professional qualifications had sought recognition and appreciation. In 1940, Jammu was a centre of education and thinking. The teachers and students of the Prince of Wales College and some teachers in the local schools took interest in writing poems and stories, organising seminars and lectures, and arranging poets' gatherings and literary meetings. But all these deliberations used to be either in English or

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Hindi or Urdu. There were two to three newspapers published in the city and all of them were in Urdu. There were a few periodicals which came out either in Urdu or in Hindi. The Prince of Wales College also brought out a periodical *Tawi* and weekly journals in English, Hindi and Urdu which carried contributions by teachers and students. The College had some other organisations also like the Hindi Parishad, the Urdu Bazm, and the English Readers' Forum at which essays and papers on literary subjects were read. In the city, there was a Hindi Parishad which had among its members, teachers and students of local colleges and schools and there was a city club known as Prince of Wales College City Club which arranged lectures, in the Ranbir High School Hall on literary and other subjects by speakers available locally and by visiting scholars. At this club, Sri K.G.Saiyidain, the then Director of Education of the J and K State, delivered a lecture on the Educational Philosophy of Dr Iqbal. Dr Siddheswar Varma gave a talk on his hunt in the Himalayas for Dogri Pahari dialects, Professor Jailal Kaul gave a talk on love-lyrics of Kashmir, a well-known Professor of history from Aligarh gave a lecture on a historical subject, a Hindi writer, Shanti Priya Dwivedi gave a talk on Hindi literature and a Senior Government Officer once gave a talk on the philosophy of the plays of Shakespeare. Punjabi Poets gatherings were on the wane but there were several people who composed poems in Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi. In this atmosphere, Prof. P.N. Pushp and Professor Ramnath Sastri joined the Prince of Wales College as teachers in Hindi and Sanskrit. Both were amateur writers interested in literature and while the former wrote poems in Hindi, the latter wrote stories in Hindi. They took interest in the literary activities of the College and the Hindi Sahitya Parishad.

Against this background of intellectual ferment and literary activity, a literary forum consisting of Prof. Ramnath Shastri, Deenoo Bhai Pant, Dharamchandra Prashant and Bhagwat Prasad Sathe and a few others was formed which

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met once or twice a week in the circumambulatory corridors of the temple of Diwan Jwala Sahai and read their Hindi compositions to each other.

In the year 1943-44, these writers switched over to writing in their mother-tongue. Deenoo Pant wrote and recited a poem in Dogri and Bhagwat Prasad Sathe wrote and read a short story at one of the meetings of this forum and with these, Dogri Samsthā was born. Deenoo's poem 'Ooth Mereyā Deśa, Hun Lo Hoī Gaī' became the watch word of Dogri Samsthā which launched a programme of stirring the spirit of renaissance among the community to recognise and appreciate the beauty of their countryside and language, to formulate the characteristic cultural values of the community and to build up a corpus of literature in Dogri. The aims which the Samsthā put before itself in 1943-44 were later published in a policy pamphlet in the beginning of 1947. They were:

1. Development of Dogri language.
2. Building up Dogri literature embodying all aspects of Dogra life.
3. Research into the history of Dogra community and its publication.
4. Forging links among the various sections of Dogra community divided into various geographical divisions and to secure for them a place of respect among other Indian communities.

In 1946, on the eve of independence and after 1947 with the attainment of independence the work of Dogri Samsthā gained momentum. With the establishment of a Broadcasting station towards the end of 1945 at Jammu and introduction of Dogri news bulletins from A.I.R., Delhi, Dogri got recognition as a sub-regional language along with Kashmiri. Between 1946 and 1949 Dogri Samsthā organised some literary sittings and poets gatherings and this gave further fillip to the growth of interest in Dogri poetry among the Dogras.

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2

Between 1944 and 1949, many Dogri poems and stories were written besides a play in Dogri. But very little of it could be published. All the published work of this decade consists of ten poems of Deenoo Pant collected in three thin publications and a pamphlet which appeared between 1945 and 1947, nine stories of Bhagawat Prasad Sathe which appeared in 1946, 37 poems of 12 poets collected in an anthology published in 1949-50 and a verse translation of the *Bhagwad Gītā* in Bhadrawahi.

Guttlūn, a collection of seven poems of Deenoo Pant, which appeared on the occasion of Dassehra in 1948, became so popular that within three to four months another edition of it had to be brought out on the occasion of Shivarātrī. In every poets' gathering, the audience demanded recitation of its first poem, 'Shahr Pehlo Pehl Ge'. In Jammu this poem became a household word. *Guttlūn* pointed to the poetic possibilities of Dogri, titillated Dogrās who were writing poetry in Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi into attempting in their own mother-tongue and awakened the latent genius of these writers. It paved the way for creation of a vibrant and interesting literature in modern idiom. Similarly, *Pehla Phull*, a collection of short stories, became a pioneer of Dogri short story writing by drawing inspiration from the tradition of Dogri folk-tales and showing possibilities of literary creation and it opened the way for Dogri prose writing. In the history of Dogri literature these two small books occupy a place of importance because of their being pioneering works.

3

Guttlūn is the first literary work in Dogri which can be called modern. In this the poet has examined, understood and experienced his contemporary situation and presented his expe-

rience in powerful and effective modern medium coloured with humour and wit in idiomatic language of daily speech. In Duggar of 1940's, the Dogras were becoming gradually conscious of the naivete of the Dogra villager, the vice of ill-matching marriages, the valour of the Dogras in the Second World War, the messiness of leaders, the feeling of impatience with an existence of dependence and a strong desire to be free from the clutches of imperialist rule, an awakening among the workers and the farmers, and the need to recognise the character of the community and the natural beauty of the countryside. Deenoo gave a voice to all these in his poems, by simply drawing facts of existence, in simple unadorned lines as in the description of the problems of daily life in the first stanza of the poem 'Shahr Pehlo Pehl Ge'; by delineating typical characters like that of Dunichand, a bent old man with sunken cheeks and face like a purse roughly unseamed; by asking questions like:

*Keenyān pe ajja eh khikho-mange raule rappe?
Kusa Kadḍī dasso eh makī-dhiki mharī thōarī?*

How have these troubles started?
Who has created these differences?

at places by dropping hints :

*Marane kola bi mandā loko !
Jeenā es gulāmi dā*

Worse than death is this life of slavery.

at places, by slogan-mongering :

*Uṭha majūrā jāg kisānā
Terā belā āyā ol.*

Rise, O worker, awake, O farmer!
It is your age now.

and at other places by applying the scalpel of satire as in these lines :

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*Jis ne kade buḍlā neīnhāhdā
dhrig dhrig oos joānī dāl*

Youth that does not boil over deserves only condemnation.

His indictment of leaders was sharp and merciless.

*Gappen de patār chhare, leedārī banai keenyā ?
Sāhare-thoare gharen bich jannī-baḷḷe mārī-mari.*

They are full of false promises and have built up their leadership thus:

By creating false alarms and fomenting differences among people.

He asked Dogras who had got used to look up to others to look at the beauty of their own land through his eyes and he drew charming pictures of beauty, of open mountains and green forests, of cascading water-falls and the hide and seek of streams and of songs of Channa in sweet *bhākhās*. His love for the presiding deity of his motherland, goddess Vaishno, mingled with the affection borne by clouds coming from the sea to give their offerings to the goddess.

The clouds have come with the love-offering of the sea. They have spread over the hill-tops with lightning as the sacred *ārati*. They sit at her feet and bow to pray.

In this collection of poems, there is one poem entitled 'Maharaja Bahadur' which is very weak both in inspiration and in craftsmanship. The poet seems to have no hold on his subject and no emotional involvement with it. In his description of the exploits of the Maharaja and of the Dogra forces in Europe, the poet seems to falter, to lose grip on the subject. In other poems the language is idiomatic, full of metaphor and fluid, the images are fresh and attractive, the words and expressions are appropriate and there is allround economy of expression.

Deenoo's 'Mangūdī Chhabīl' had appeared earlier on the occasion of Diwali in 1946. It is a long narrative poem of 32 pages depicting the conflict between the haves and the have-nots, between the clever and the simple, through an

incident drawn from the contemporary situation of Dogra society. Nathu borrowed hundred rupees from a village money-lender, Sohnu Shah. He spent all the life paying the interest on his borrowing. Nathu's son got fed up with the exploitation by Sohnu's son, Shankar Shah, and struck him one day with the result that he had to sell his house and field, go to jail and put his son Mangoo, at a tender age, as Shankar Shah's boy servant. When Shankar Shah died, Mangoo had to man a *chhabīl*, opened to commemorate his memory. He grew up in hardship and penury and had to hear the abuse of his employers. He put up with all these in the hope that when his father came back from the jail, he would go with him to a distant land to set up a new home. But when he heard that his father had died in jail he got wild with the spirit of vengeance and went to the house of the Shah and set it on fire with its inmates inside. The subject is very dramatic—tension between the workers and their masters, between those who follow social and moral laws and those who follow their own ways of life—between the exploited and the exploiters—a situation pregnant with revolution. The subject is also contemporary not only in Duggar but in the whole of India. In villages, money-lenders spread their tentacles over the farmers who have been exploited from generation to generation. The presentation of the subject is interesting and effective. With a thin veneer of satire, the local idiom and weaving of small incidents, the poet has been able to create atmosphere and effect but at places he has diluted the dramatic element and tempo of the poem, by introducing his own ideas and sermonising and incorporating lengthy descriptions of power of money and pleasures of youth.

The third book of Deenoo Pant to appear about that time was *Veer Gulāb*. In 44 pages, the book describes the battle between the Sikhs and the Dogras below the Gumat Gate of Jammu City and the military genius of 16-yearold Gulab Singh. In the first canto the attack of the Sikhs and announcement of attack and the order of Meān Motā in the dark and stormy

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night is described. The second canto deals with the collection of Dogra youths for the defence of Jammu and going out of Gulab Singh mounted on a horse. The third canto describes the camp of the Sikhs in the vast jungle on the bank of the Tawi below Gumat Gate. The fourth canto deals with the massage of Meān Moṭā in the winter night to his Jawans and the response of the Jawans with *Jaya Durge* and the second appearance of Gulab Singh. This second appearance of Gulab Singh is described in detail with costume and his dignified carriage. The fifth canto describes the siege of the Sikhs by the Dogras in the dark night and the sixth describes the rout of the Sikhs, the order of their commander Hukum Singh, the massacre and the shouts of battle, the attack by Gulab Singh's group and the leadership of Mean Moṭā. In the seventh canto is described Gulab Singh's master stroke of cleverness which resulted in the Sikhs running helter-skelter. It also describes how they rally up and their guns start firing and how Gulab Singh takes over the command of the Dogra force. The eighth canto describes the death of about 200 Dogra Jawans and their dispersal into the flanks. The ninth canto describes how by damming up the waters of the Tawi, the guns of the Sikhs were made ineffective and how they were made to leave the field and how many of them were killed and captured.

The subject-matter has been marshalled into small cantos, Veer Gulab has been presented dramatically—first in a glimpse, then with details about his forceful personality and picturesque costume and finally by description of his action in the battle-field. The description of nature is very effective and in the words of Deenoo Pant, storm and clouds and cold get charged with life. The atmosphere of battle comes alive before the eyes of the reader or listener and the river Tawi assumes the form of goddess Kali (locally called Kalaka) and comes to the help of Dogras. The selection of words is in keeping with the subject-matter. Lines move with a martial rhythm. Dogra history is full of examples where

men have laid down their lives for their honour and freedom. Similarly, there are examples of Dogras having achieved distinction in the art of war. One such example forms the narrative of Deenoo Pant's poem. The poem is no doubt in the old tradition of Dogra Bārs. But the subject has been presented in a new way.

In 1948, Deenoo Pant wrote a poem called 'Sārā Bāpū' on the occasion of the murder of Mahatma Gandhi. This poem is not as good as his earlier writing and is full of cheap sentiments and also weak in literary craftsmanship.

4

During the last days of this decade Dogri Samsthā, Jammu, brought out a collection of poems called *Jāgo Duggar* which contained select poems of 12 poets who had received appreciation during poets' gatherings.

The collection carries three poems of an old Dogri poet Hardutt. 'Phuṭṭ is Desāwālī', 'Dālatidā Dhandhā' and 'O Dogrea Desā'. Each of these poems is with a different rhyme scheme. The themes, as is apparent from the titles, are mutual distrust, litigation and apathy and complacency of Dogra society. The description is full of humour, satire and realistic, and the tone is exhortative and style forceful. It is the same Hardutt of the pre-forties, with a greater awareness of the social milieu, a sharper edge in his humour and satire and a deeper sense of regret and sorrow.

Jāgo Duggar contains five short songs of Deenoo Pant—one speaks of the poverty, simplicity and beauty of Duggar, the second expresses rebellion against exploitation by Jagirdars and against the feudal structure of Dogra society based on casteism and class and religious differences, the third is a song calling upon the farmers and the youth to rise and awaken and fight and destroy the old social order, the fourth song is a chorus containing a call to the farmers to recognize

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the changing times and change the society and the fifth song is a verse dialogue between a brother and a sister wherein the sister insists on the brother to go to the border to fight for the defence of the country. In these songs of Deenoo, two sentiments are prominent : 1. Love of the country and 2. Revolt against the social order which allows exploitation of workers and farmers. Songs dealing with the second sentiment flow from the poet's experience, and the depth of his experience combined with revolutionary fervour give a certain strength and beauty to the songs which are not visible in the songs expressing the first sentiment.

Similar sentiments form the subject of Krishan Samailpuri's two poems included in the collection—one, an eulogy to Duggar which is described as a basket of flowers ('Phullendā khārā), a country unique in the world and an apple of the poet's eye, a country of gods and goddesses, generals and leaders and of rivers, hills and songs and the second, showing a resolve to change the society—'Asen eh din palaṭī suitane na'. Krishan Samailpuri has a certain facility in writing songs of love in folk style. 'Man terā' is a song of this type. His second song included here is a political song and is set to a Punjabi tune.

It was, however, Parmanand Almast who came to be known as the singer of love-songs par excellence. He sang his poem and songs in sweet lilting tunes in a peculiar way of his own and moulded his compositions on folk patterns, stressing certain words and repeating certain lines. 'Pāhāṛen dā bassanā' is typical of his best work. 'Pāhāṛe dā bassanā' describes the beauty of life in the hills by creating word-pictures of chattering water-falls (*chhar-chhrāndde nārū*), cool breezes, soothing shades, blooming Champa, flutes playing and *gorīs* singing with their hands on their ears, green hillsides soaked with light showers, moonlight stealing into the heart and kindling the fire of yearning for the separated beloved. It appears as if the beauty and joy of life in the hills are drenched in the rain of love and sweet sorrow of separation. His other

four poems, 'Jāg', 'Peer Apanī', 'Desā de sapāī gī' and 'Surga neīn Jāna hundā' do not have the freshness and emotional appeal. The last mentioned poem is a sharp attack on organized religion which has blinded us to the realities of life and made us inhuman :

Moen Mullen Pandten us dangar banāe de

Lala Barkat Ram of Doda, Chunni Lal Kamla, Durga Das Chamak, Jagan Nath, Kalara and Bal Krishna whose work is included in *Jāgo Duggar* were among the dozen odd poets who sprang up like mushrooms to write for the Kavi sammelans and who failed to make an enduring mark on the Dogri literary scene. They wrote on subjects of contemporary interest and evinced a certain social awareness as shown by the titles of their poems 'Uṭho sher jawāno' (call to the Dogra jawans to fight in defence of the country when Pakistanis from across the border threatened to overrun Jammu and Kashmir), 'Desā de Bairī' (lamenting the sad situation of the country like a boat caught in a storm), 'Karsānen dī Duniyā' (describing the day-to-day life and problems of farmers), 'Garīben di Dayālī' (which is a torture for the poor who cannot afford to celebrate the Diwali festival), 'Pāharī Sundarī' (describing the beauty of a belle), 'Motiyā' (the white fragrant flower dear to Dogra women), 'Manukkha te Pakkharu' (contrasting the life of freedom of a bird with man's life in bondage) and so on. But these poems lacked poetic imagination and felicity of expression except perhaps in the case of Jagannath Kalra who made his audiences roar with laughter with poems of social satire like 'Āūn changā sā grān' (I was better off in the village) and 'Thaīn', in the style of Hardutt.

Ved Pal Deeb and Ramnath Shastri, on the other hand, showed great promise and poetic sensibility in their contributions to *Jāgo Duggar*.

Ved Pal Deep who used to compose poems in Hindi during his student days also started writing in Dogri in this decade and in about three or four years he composed about 50 poems and songs. This collection contains one song, a

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poem praising the Dogras and two small poems on Holi and the new freedom respectively. The last two poems contain progressive views and the poet's creative imagination invests them with liveliness and colour. The sun and the sunlight assume human forms and play Holi—the sun shooting rays and the sunlight showering colours and the poet cajoles Holi to come and bring with her warmth and laughter for everybody:

*Inyan gai lālī dī barkha barah:
Hāsse dī guthalī kholiai aa!
Holie aa!*

In the poem on the new freedom the poet calls on freedom to leave palaces and move in the fields of humble farmers, in the dark lanes of hungry workers and in the thatched huts of the poor:

Tūn kache koṭhen ch bal

You should light the lamps in the hovels of the poor.

Ved Deep's poems are rich with imagery, tuneful rhythm, appropriate words at the proper places and their meaningful and effective utilisation to build up pictures.

Ramnath Shastri used to write long short stories and short poems in Hindi before he started writing stories and prose poems and one-act plays in Dogri. Three of his Dogri poems find a place in *Jāgo Duggar*. All the three poems have three things in common—a concern for the Dogras, imagery from the main symbol of their life, i.e., battle, and the stance of addressing an audience. The first poem 'Eh Banjar Banayīān kinyān kesar kayāriāyn' refers to the past of the Dogras when the land of Duggar was a field of saffron flowers and its art and chivalry and its folk-songs were known far and wide and which had now become barren because of the lethargy of its inhabitants and their indifference to their past traditions and he calls upon them to rise: *Uṭho pabbān mārī shero veeren deyo vāraṣo* (Rise with the roar of lions, you inheritors

of the brave!). The second poem 'Eh kuna Āyā!' deals with the contemporary situation when times have changed with the advent of independence and the workers and farmers are full of hope and this hope is reflected in the nature around and the workers and farmers have razed to the ground the structures of exploitation. In the third poem 'Tus chup chāp', the poet speaks of the way of creative peaceful activity on the principles of non-violence preached by Mahatma Gandhi, but the images woven into the structure of the poem are those of violence, e.g., swords, spears and daggers, horses trampling under foot the enemies and jawāns waiting patiently for an opportunity and carrying behind their glum faces sparks of fire. There are images drawn from battle, familiar to the Dogras. The poem is a successful attempt in blank verse.

Yesh Sharma who gained popularity with his sweet voice and sentimental rendering of songs in poets' gatherings is another poet whose four poems are included in this selection. These poems are rather poor in workmanship and they lack authenticity of experience. The first poem 'Duggar Des Bachānā Jinde' is a good synthesis of rhythm and movement and it must have created enthusiasm among the listeners but in cold print the poem looks dull and drab. In the poem 'Karsān' and the other poem 'Sare Saune Gī Shirkān Te Chauk Pede' there is an element of slogan-mongering by asking questions as to why those who grow crops do not get enough to eat, why those who weave cloth do not get a sheet to cover themselves and why those who build palaces have to sleep on bare ground and why farmers and labourers who provide sustenance for the rich and princes do not withdraw their support. 'Sanjhā De Die' in sentimental strain deals with despair and appears to have been inspired by a poem of the popular Hindi poet, H.R. Bachchan.

The poems of 12 poets of 1940's are poems written for the poets' gatherings and, therefore, they lack depth of individual experience and the high quality of workmanship. Subjects are also limited to the sufferings of the 'have-nots', the

beauty of Dogra country, the simplicity and bravery and inertia and superstition of Dogras, new freedom and life of the hills, Dogra soldiers and *pahāri* belles and the mess made by the leaders and agents of religion. This poetry of the 1940's does not appear to have travelled very far from the tradition of folk poetry; it has rather shed some of the frankness and naturalness of expression of Dogri folk-song and acquired little in sophistication of form or depth of emotional experience.

5

In this decade very little Dogri prose was written; just one page of introduction to *Guttun* by Pandit Ganga Nath and 40 pages of *Pehlā Phull*, a collection of Dogri stories by Bhagawat Prasad Sathe. Yet these pages point to the immense potentialities of Dogri prose.

Pandit Ganga Nath has a fine literary style and it is a pity that he did not write more. I feel that with his scholarship and intellectual acumen, his command over the language and his concise and charming idiomatic style revealed in this brief introduction piece, he could have made substantial contribution to Dogri prose.

Ramnath Shastri wrote his introduction to *Veer Gulāb* and *Jāgo Duggar* in Hindi. Even the pamphlet of aims and objects of 'Dogri Samsthā' brought out in 1947 was in Hindi. One wonders as to why these were not brought out in Dogri. Hardatt wrote an introduction to *Pehlā Phull* in Dogri, but his style does not have the freshness and naturalness and idiomatic felicity of Pandit Ganga Nath's Dogri prose.

Pehlā Phull contains nine stories which are in the nature of cameos of Dogra rural life. Some of them are pieces of pure folklore, but they do not contain any moralising or flights of fantasy. The first five stories are good examples of succinct and concise expression, of drawings with the mini-

mum of strokes. The plots in these stories are straight single lines, the characters are plain and situations are from everyday life. The shortest story 'Hīkhī' is of one page and the longest story 'Sahārā' is of five pages and the rest are of two to four pages. But the characters are living, lines of the plots are deep and the situations are striking and touching. In 'Kurṃā dā Lāhmā', characters of Mohru Jogī and Kesar who are prepared to sacrifice their lives to save the honour of their family; in 'Mangtā', the characters of the owner of the flour mill Jhīr Mangtā and Mohamdū and the former's writing away his mill in the name of the latter in return for a little affection; in 'Bubān', Bubān who is fond of *kundals* (feather ornaments for ears) of Kashmir and the Pahlwān soldier; in 'Sahārā', the child-widow Pāro caught in a conflict between tradition and situation; in 'Hīkhī', the dying Narātū and shaken Amaru on hearing the news of the drowning of their son are characters that live in the memory. 'Ammān', 'Khaḍ-jantar' and 'Pehlā Phull' contain folk legends relating to Raja Suchet Singh, Raja Ranbir Singh and Raja Bhudev respectively. 'Dohari' has been written with the purpose of trying to highlight the evil of reciprocal marriages and does not come up to much.

The prose style is on the pattern of the style of folk-tales—brief sentences, punctuated with idioms and telling, meaningful expressions. The language is the spoken language of Ramnagar in Jammu.

6

In this decade a second translation of *Śrimad Bhagawad Gītā* appeared, and it was in Bhadrawahi verse. The translator was one Pandit Gowri Shankar Bhadrawahi. This was the first book written in Bhadrawahi dialect and it offers a good example of written Bhadrawahi in Devanagari script. It brought in print for the first time several Vedic expressions

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and grammatical forms as preserved in the local dialect and many words and sounds of Dogri, some sounds of Kashmiri and some elements of Pangwali all mixed up. In this book, one comes across hundreds of words and their forms which are very similar to those found in Dogri as spoken in Jammu and Chamba like *Tun*, *Āsā*, *Māhnū*, *Gallan*, *Aun*. In Bhadrawahi Dogri, *Kuna* becomes *Kona*, *Kuthuān* becomes *Kothān*, *tukī* becomes *tuī*, *migi* becomes *meīn*. *Sa* sounds become *Sha* sounds—*Sunā*, *Sukkā*, *janā* become *Shunā*, *Shukkā*, *Zunā* respectively. There are, however, many words in Bhadrawahi which a Dogra not familiar with Bhadrawahi cannot comprehend. The translation shows that the translator has derived inspiration for writing this book from the Dogri translation of the *Gītā* by Prof. Gauri Shankar. The book contains Sanskrit ślokas, their Bhadrawahi verse renderings and their Hindi prose translations.

CHAPTER FIVE

Dogri Writing of the Fifties : Years of Consolidation

1

IF the forties were the period of incubation, the fifties can be considered as the decade of consolidation and expansion, for new Dogri writing. Thirty-six Dogri publications appeared during this decade as against six thin booklets of the previous decade. This increase in the volume of Dogri writing was due to the following important factors:

(a) The Dogri Samsthā of Jammu drew up a publication programme;

(b) Organisations of Dogras like the Dogra Mandal of Jammu, Dogra Mandal of Delhi and Kangra Yuvak Sabha of Delhi also paid attention towards publication of Dogri writing;

(c) Seeing the success of publications of Dogri Samsthā, some enterprising individuals took steps to get their own writings published themselves;

(d) Some new and young writers entered the field of writing; and

(e) The Research and Publications Department of the Jammu and Kashmir Government and the Jammu and

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Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages extended their patronage and assistance to the publication of Dogri works.

Dogri Samsthā of Jammu brought out 17 publications—five collections of poems, four collections of short stories, two playlets, four books on Vedanta, one verse translation and an issue of a magazine in Dogri named *Namichetana*. Dogra Mandāl, Jammu, published two translations—one of a work of history called *Gulābnāmā* and the other, of *Satyanārāyaṇa Vrata Kathā*. Dogra Mandāl, Delhi, brought out three issues of *Namichetana*. Sarvashri Kriparam Sastri, Raghunath Singh Samyal, Ved Rahi, Dharm Chand Prashant and Vaidya Parshuram Nagar got their own works published independently. In the middle of the decade, Kangra Yuvak Sabha published some Dogri material in its annual numbers which were largely in English and Hindi. During the last year of the decade, the Research and Publications Department of Jammu and Kashmir Government published *Brahmanand Sankeertan* and the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages published five selections of Dogri poems. In the beginning of this decade, the entire output of Dogri writing could be carried in a pocket, but by the end of this decade, the Dogri books required at least a sizeable satchel. In the Dogri writing of the forties there was preponderance of poems with some stories, but the Dogri writing of the fifties covered not only poetry and short stories, but also plays, verse and prose translations and Dogri journal.

2

The poetic scene of the decade consists of the work of twenty poets. Six of them, i e., Deenoo Pant, Kishan Samailpuri, Parmanand Almast, Ramnath Shastri, Ved Pal Deep and Yash Sharma had already figured in *Jāgo Duggar*. New names in the field of Dogri verse and poetry were those of Brahmanand, Parshuram

Nagar, Kehari Singh Madhukar, Shambhunath, Tara Samailpuri, Raghunath Singh Samyal, Shukdev, Padmā, Āwārā, Durgadutt Shastri, Lalit, Moolraj Mehta, Ramkumar Abrol and Ved Rāhi. Their compositions appeared partly in independent works and partly in collections and selections. While the six poets of the forties maintained their promise and showed improved performance both in the content and form of their work, the work of the newcomers was unequal both in quantity and quality. Brahmanand was the most prolific of them with five publications to his credit. Mulraj Mehta, Ramkumar Abrol, Lalit, Ved Rahi and Durga Dutta Sastri had only a poem each or a song or two published. There were others who had brought their compositions to poets' gatherings or literary society meetings but never appeared in print.

Shukdev Shastri and Parshuram Nagar can at best be called versifiers. Both added a book each—the former wrote *Swachhanda Trivānī* and the latter a verse translation of the *Gītā. Trivānī* contains eight compositions, five of which are set in imitation of Sanskrit metres like Shikharipī, Mandākrāntā and Bhujang Prabhat and contain substantial amount of Sanskrit vocabulary. They propound old orthodox values and views of life—the world is an illusion, to cross the ocean of this world you should repeat the name of God, worship deities and exercise discrimination. One poem gives a description of the old customs of Dogras, their food-habits, places of pilgrimage, their temperament and so on. Another poem satirises the ways of court flatterers. Nagar's *Dogri Gītā*, the fourth to be published in Dogri and the third in verse, offers nothing new in presentation or interpretation. He has tried to be close to the original, but has failed to do justice to the spirit of the original and the verse hardly rises above the level of prose. Then there was a centenary volume on 1857 brought out in 1957 for which most of the Dogri poets wrote but very few could tackle the theme with creative imagination. Even Deenoo Pant and Ramnath failed to write good poems on the subject.

Deenoo Pant's contribution to Dogri poetry of this decade is just 12 new poems, nine of which appeared in 1956 in his collection entitled *Dādī Te Mā*. The poem 'Dādī Te Mā' is an attempt to offer a naive solution to the complex problem of relationship between Hindi and the local language Dogri by comparing the former to grandmother and the latter to mother. Other poems except 'Gujarī' are concerned with the poet's pre-occupation with social injustice, the tottering feudal structure and the need for social change. In 'Jān idhar ho jān uddhar ho', the poet puts his finger on the pulse of the units of Dogra middle-class and poor society—educated clerks, petty officials, tradesmen, writers, retired military pensioners, teachers, shop-keepers, farmers, workers and so on to see how their minds tick and calls upon them to give up the state of indecision and inaction and do something as it was no use living on empty hope. In *Kamm Karā te ruṭṭī de*, he challenges the leaders who have occupied positions of power after independence to make provision for food, shelter and clothing for the poor:

Samyān karī de blind sārā kullī, jullī te chullī da.

To him people with power and money and privilege appear like pampered bulls, who can be brought under control only by the unity of the workers and hard work. The old Duggar was a decaying and rotting set-up in which the common people went half-clad and half-fed but Jagirdar and money lenders and the princely class had all that they wanted and he hopes that the new Duggar will be the Duggar of common people. 'Kavī te Kāmmī' is a very good poem in this genre where the poet speaks with great passion and intensity of emotional conviction which overflows in powerful imagery. The poet calls upon the worker to dig deeper to the tune of his songs and inspire him to sing new songs, work faster to perspiration to enable him to string garlands of pure pearls with drops of his perspiration and blow the conch of cou-

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rage so that he may light the prayer lamp of faith to release the fortunes of the country by breaking open the fortresses of destiny.

*Dakkī diyān bahārān leyī auche
Bhāgen de kile taroṛie.*

‘Gujarī’ is a delicately and imaginatively etched pen-picture of a milk-maid—the daughter of Eve, liberated and pure like the first wave of Ganga with laughter-like flowers and big arched eyes a-twinkle with longing.

Kishan Samailpuri wrote songs, ghazals, dohas, kavitts, poems and a few *kundalis* and *savaiyās*. Kishan’s forte is in his songs; their content, their style, their stance are all patterned on current popular folk-songs and perhaps their appeal is due to their being near the folk tradition and their being so close to the earth. The poet has written in one of his poems:

Kishan Samailpuri is made for songs
He burns midnight oil and
fills sheets of paper with his scribbles!

It appears that he absorbed the spirit of the folk-songs and then composed his own out of what he had absorbed. His work is like taking unchiselled diamonds and presenting them after cutting them. ‘Chambe dī lārī’, ‘Chambe dī manakalī’, ‘Chainchalo de hāsse’, ‘Payoke dā bānkā shaunki jogi’, ‘Dhakkī chaṛhadī sapoluye dī chāl chaladī gorī’, ‘Pāniye aundī gorī’ and ‘Jammuye dī rāt’ are among his sweetest songs, replete with tender emotion and picturesque expression. The ghazals, not so satisfying are tinged with romantic feelings and a light layer of humour. Dohās contain thoughts not quite fused with poetic sensibility. In Kavitts, the poet sings praises of Jammu, which according to him is the land of gods and goddesses and heroes and brave soldiers, and narrates the legend of how Jammu was first founded. In *Kundalis* also there is praise and description of the flora and fauna of Dogra country and a very touching reference to the evil of

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ill-matched marriages still current in the Dogra rural areas. The Savaiyās and the poem 'Dogrā Panchhi' also deal with the praise of the Dogra country. He is partial in his description in the sense that he picks up only those things which are good and about which he can write well and he overcharges them with emotion. It is not a realistic picture of the Dogra country that he draws.

Almast continued to write in a romantic strain, but with the advancing age his poetry appears to suffer in flight of fancy under the burden of thought and experience. Only three of his seven new compositions of this decade possess the sweetness and music and tender romantic emotionalism of his poems of the forties. He is in his element in poems like 'Kāgad Chittari' and 'Gorī jhund neīn kholai' which deal with beauty of feminine form and pangs of love of separated lovers. Here, the poet indulges in full-throated appreciation of the beauty of the eyes and figure and form of the beloved, and while describing this beauty, his heart trembles like water in a vessel. To his *chakor* eyes, the face of the beloved looks like the full moon and the sweet words falling from her pink lips and pearl-like teeth appear to him like buds of *champaka*. During the month of Sravan when the east wind blows and the lightning flashes and the mists spread, the hillsides become green; streams, water-falls, ponds and tanks are filled with rain-water; the peacocks begin to dance and birds raise cries from every side and the Gorī becomes sad. She picks up the pen and starts writing to her lover, filling pages with this and that until her pen breaks, but no reply comes from her lover and she weeps and calls upon the crow to fly and carry her message and feeds the parrots and whispers messages into their ears. His poems dealing with other subjects lack depth of experience and of thought and they look like mere collocations of words.

Ramnath Shastri's contribution to Dogri poetry of this decade consists of nine poems, a few couplets of two ghazals and a translation of Bhartrihari's *Nīti-śataka*. Poems com-

memorating the centenary of 1857 lamenting the compulsions and restrictions placed on the retired old Dogra jawan during his military service and 'Desh Bandana' which describes the Dogra country extending from Poonch to Simla, are poor poetry compared to his other six poems. Three of these six deal with problems facing Duggar and the poet's predicament in the face of these problems. While his imagination hungers for the beauty of buds and flowers of youth and yearns for pleasures of love in gardens, sweet with music, his love for his country keeps him tied to more mundane matters like searching for threads of cultural traditions of Dogras—the poetry of Dattū, the paintings of Pāhaṛī painters and the legends of heroes like Dido and Dātā Ranu. He observes signs of revolution in the Dogra community and he finds injustice even in the conduct of clouds. With independence came many-coloured rainbows and myriad notes of music. "But, for whom?" asks the poet, and then answers: "For peacocks who were already covered with coats of colours, but swans who were capable of separating milk from water become all the more sad and retired in confusion and fear." 'Paurān' describes the beauty of poplars of Kashmir valley, the shady richness of chinārs, the calm depth of the lakes, the elasticity of willows, and the variety and wealth of Kashmir folk-songs. 'Chakkī' and 'Eh rātin da khiri belā' present inimitable and beautiful pictures of Dogra life. While the former describes very touchingly the feelings of helplessness of the woman separated from her husband and placed in the hands of her mother-in-law, the latter poem contains three tender pictures—that of the last moments of the night, light of the day slowly advancing and darkness holding the strings of a thin curtain with the background of multi-coloured notes, that of a bevy of girls who look like the bright flight of white swans and who spread light in the lane as they go:

Bol baresa dā rāsa leyie, kiranān baniye gailli chamake

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Nheren de mana thoonde jande, eh lol de jhumke lamke

and that of a young Brahman widow, who goes to the tank every morning to cool her burning youth. All the three vignettes are drawn with great feeling and economy of expression, in measured lines which make three aspects of Dogra life come alive—the life in Jammu during the last legs of the night, the life of small Dogra girls full of hope and laughter and the pain and suffering of a young Hindu widow, the helplessness of a flower caught in the mire of narrow, orthodox and caste-ridden Hindu society.

Ramnath Shastri tried his hand at ghazals also and for translations, he spread a wide net—a *richa* from Rig-veda, a translation of a Persian poem on Gandhi written by the Nizam of Hyderabad and hundred Sanskrit ślokas of Bhatrihari's *Nīti-śataka*. Choice of *Nīti-śataka* was particularly happy as it fell in line with the popular tradition of Bārs of Bhatrihari, popular in Dogra country. The padas of Bhatrihari contain the quintessence of experience of wise kings who had led a full life and their beauty in the original Sanskrit is well known. But the Dogri translations are not of the same uniform quality; some of them have an element of beauty, others have an element of charm but some of them are poor shadows of the originals. The imitation of the word pictures of Bhatrihari on Dogri canvas loses some of the sharpness of lines and richness of colours of the original. Whether it may be considered a defect of the translator's workmanship or a defect of Dogri canvas or a defect of local colour, the defect is apparent. In place of two lines of Bhatrihari, there are at places four lines and in place of four, ten to fourteen. In some places the accent is at the wrong place. At other places too much colour has been spread and the original is drowned in the emotionalism and sentimentality of the translator. At other places, the translation is not accurate and precise. There is such a vast difference between the experiences of the original writer and those of the translator and between the

vehicles of these experiences (Sanskrit having a richness and plasticity from which Dogri is still far away) that these defects are inevitable. On the other hand, the translator deserves all praise for his attempt.

The promise which Vedpal Deep raised with his compositions of the forties was fulfilled in his compositions of the fifties which consist of five poems, two savaiyās, one chaupadā and eight ghazals which appeared in *Madhukan*, *Namichetana* and 1857. His compositions are concerned with four main sentiments—deep personal love which could not find fulfilment and wounded affection which becomes fond of its own wounds, communist ideology imbued with a dream of ultimate success of workers, farmers and labourers of the world against capitalism, a fine sensitiveness for changing moods of nature and sentiment of patriotism for Duggar. The poet combines with maturity of thought a flair for finding the right words and style for expression of his thoughts and emotions resulting in artistic and meaningful creations. The first mentioned sentiment finds expression in his tender sweet ghazals, enshrining insatiable love and the second in some ghazals and poems like the one entitled 'Ajja mēnh nayin kallā' where he is carried away by an excess of idealism in using different similes for expression of a single idea. This very idea was expressed by the Urdu poet Majrooh Sultanpuri in just two lines. The poet claims that the workers, labourers, and farmers have risen and with sickle, hammer and plough in their hands, they have flooded the earth and the pillars of capitalism will fall before the flood, like match sticks. In the poem 'Badalī gayī duniyā', there is a very touching picture of a young Dogra girl and the state of her mind on an evening wet with rain when she finds her house dripping, all the members of her family sick and no food in the house. She is at the critical age when she has left behind her childhood and has crossed prematurely the threshold leading to responsibility and worries. Seeing the girls who are free from worry, who are playing and singing and looking at the burden that rests

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on her and seems to overwhelm her, she is confused and finding no way out of the situation she bursts into tears. The music of the poem is full of sadness and lines seem to move with a heavy heart and heavy feet. In the poem 'Bindak jor gai lagna ho', there is music of the drum and the words appear to jostle each other to move forward. People are busy with dance and music in the villages and the poet hopes that the new age will put a little pep into them, so that they will change and in place of wild bushes, there will be beds of saffron flowers.

Both the savaiyas are quite fine—one describes the wonder that human hand can achieve by sending satellites in the sky and the other describing the break of dawn. 'Badala ne sijji ri sanyān' evokes a pretty picture of evening with the melancholy and brooding sadness of the poet corresponding to the dark shades of the evening, the waft of memory corresponding to breezes and the clouds of the mind raining through the eyes matching the enveloping dampness and the weariness of the mind mingling with the sadness of nature and the poet's heart becoming one with the heart of nature.

During this decade, four songs and eight poems of Yash appeared in *Magadhuli*, *Namichetana* and 1857. All the four songs are pretty. One describes the feelings of a young damsel tormented by her in-laws and caught between pulls of her devotion to her lover and her loyalty to her husband. The memory of her lover cuts through her soul and her eyes cannot contain the tears that well up at the thought of her lover and on the pretext of having her eyes wet due to burning half-dried cow-dung cakes she gives vent to her crying. Another entitled 'Sanyān ghirdiān chitta kamhalāyī jandā' describing the condition of a separated lover is a sad sweet song which the poet's deep feelings, the use of meaningful words and music of lines combine to create a memorable picture of a woman living by the light of her memories:

Aūn cheten diyen gī bālī lainnī

Jaellai chaune passen nherā chhāī jandā

The other two songs dealing with fairs—'Basant' and 'Melā' respectively, also present good pictures of Dogra life—that of a damsel dressed in yellow and blooming like a full-blown marigold, tinkling anklets, shining fair limbs, penetrating eyes and features, gold-yellow clothes and ornaments and lost in the dream of meeting her lover and getting bangles from him and that of Dogra children crying for sweets, young men with turbans and metal-banded sticks going for wrestling and women in sandalwood pink wraps, eyes dark with thick collyrium, bending like *champak* twigs with the weight of their youth.

The poem about 1857 in which the poet imagines the year 1857 in the shape of a writer who wrote in blood with the pen of his sword, the poem entitled 'Merā sāthī' in which he dreams of improving the world along with his comrades, the poem 'Sambāl Kara' which attempts to arouse the Dogras by reminding them of the tradition of Jitto and Dido and 'Aman' in which he speaks of the need for peace are comparatively poor stuff. Poems entitled 'Panshān' and 'Merā Desa' are better. The subject of the former is a Dogra wife, who has been described in her various roles—playful as in the fair, sweet and intoxicating as beloved, sad and drooping like a flower while waiting for her husband in the evening, full of devotion and love of God while she burns an oil lamp, suffering and hard-working in her in-laws' house and full of the milk of affection as a mother. In the latter poem, the poet tries to describe the various shapes in which he sees his country and the simple and touching glimpses of her countrymen and countrywomen—as of a village girl holding tight to her breast a lamb, burdened with youth and poverty and bright like a flame, shapes of nature—singing streams, green fields, rising moon behind the trees, clouds in the sky like a flock of sheep of Gaddis and shapes of various seasons. It appears that wherever Yash sees a pretty feminine face or a romantic form of nature, his inspiration begins to stir and takes shape in beautifully-worded song. In a sense,

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Yash is a singer of Dogra womanhood. who has given voice to her love and beauty, her suffering and her pain, her playful laughter, her helplessness and her mute songs.

4

Among the noticeable new voices that filled the corridors of Dogri poetry during the fifties were three of elderly men—Brahmananda, Raghunath Singh Samyal and Shambunath, and three of young men—Tara Samailpuri, Onkar Singh Awara and Kehari Singh Madhukar and one of a young girl Padma.

The phenomenon of emergence of Swami Brahmananda Tirtha as a prolific Dogri versifier at the age of 60 was really remarkable. No Dogri writer had so far published four books and a large-sized work like *Sri Brahma Sankirtan*. Sitting in his shelter in Amareshwar temple in Jammu, the city of temples, and listening to poems recited at the poets' gatherings in the adjoining compound of Brahmana Sabha, he started writing Dogri verse in early fifties and in about six years he had written enough; there was material for five books—*Gunge dā Gur*, *Manasarovar*, *Guptaganga*, *Amritavarsha* and *Sri Brahma Sankirtan*. All these five publications have for their subject-matter popular Vedanta—a hotchpotch of Hindu mythology, priestly lore, Bhāgawata, Puranas, Upanishads and Persian Sufism of Hashim, Nasim and Niaz, and they are all written in the same syle which tends to be monotonous, humdrum and repetitive. *Sri Brahma Sankirtan* consists of about 300 pages and is divided into eight Prakaranas and may be called the magnum opus of Swami Brahmananda. These publications added considerably to the volume of Dogri verse and they brought at one place in the local idiom and language popular Hindu philosophy current in North India.

When Raghunath Singh Samyal came to the field of Dogri Poetry, he was even older than Swami Brahmananda,

but he brought a certain zest and devotion to his work which belied his years. In 1953, he got a 16-page poem on Dogra Desa and Dogri Boli published in the shape of a pamphlet. Next year he got his Dogri verse translation of the *Gītā* published and his other poems appeared in 1959 in the selection entitled *Arunimā*. The work of Brahmananda was all coloured saffron by Vedanta, but Samyal's work has more than one hue—spiritual and religious devotion, love for Dogra community and Dogra speech, condemnation of the evils of Dogra society and new fashions, and sensitiveness for nature. His style is emotionally charged, tinged with irony and torrential in its flow.

Among his devotional compositions may be counted his 'Gītā in Dogri verse', 'Krishna Līlā', 'Mālī' and 'Mahimā'. The *Gītā* has a certain linguistic felicity and the quality of effective use of Dogri but the poet misses the central message of this great book when he says that the sole purpose of Krishna's sermon to Arjuna was to persuade him for war. There are several inaccuracies in rendering. Poems like 'Dogrā Des te Dogri Bolī' and 'Dogra Des Jāgāl Jāyan' show Samyal's love for his own country and language. The second poem is a good example of Samyal's style—in the first stanza there is a picture of Dogra country, in the second and third of the Dogra people, in the fourth of the danger to the community and in the last there is a challenge like a call to arms to overcome the danger, like a general summing up the situation and the capability of his force and then giving them the task to execute.

Samyal is opposed to new trends in fashions and social change. 'Kho', 'Inde kolā chhuṛko', 'Fashion' and 'Bhālī Ajādī' are poems containing his views in these matters. He expresses himself strongly against co-education and free movement of young girls outside their homes. He is unhappy over the loss of old values of life. Being pre-occupied too much with God, *Gītā*, social evils, Rajput tradition, Dogras and Dogri, he paid scant attention towards natural beauty of

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Dogra countryside. But he had a feeling for nature and the power of delineation of beauty of nature as is shown in a very small poem of his called 'Prabhāt'. This is perhaps his best poem from the point of view of craftsmanship, choice of words and sounds and their utilization to convey his feelings. The poet has woven the sounds and sights of early morning with the life of want and poverty, with exquisite tenderness and sensitiveness.

When Sambhunath started writing poetry he was about 47 or 48. Having lived in rural Duggar and worked as a clerk in a city, he had seen the simplicity of life in a Dogra village and the drudgery of a petty clerk. From this background he picked up subjects for his poems and wrote in a simple, effective and descriptive style with feeling. He published about 18 poems including the fifteen forming the collection called *Bharās*. *Phūlān dā kurtā* and *Clerk* are the most representative of his works. They are sensitive portrayals of small segments of Dogra life—one of a village Dogra girl and another of a city clerk. *Phūlān*, the young daughter of Naseebū Baroāl is a pretty girl full of magic and charm of youth. While she is picking up cowdung cakes, her shirt gets caught in a thorny bush and gets torn.

It was not her shirt alone that was torn
Her heart was also shredded.

On returning home, she faces the abuses of her mother; she is used to them, but she is afraid of a beating from her father. "Don't beat me, Bāpū, I did not do it deliberately." The father sees her pale, fear-cast face and trembling form and his anger melts into affection. The incident of the tearing of a shirt in a poor family which cannot afford to have another shirt and its effect on the mother, the father and the confused shocked mental state of the girl are all described as if from inside. The picture of a clerk is delineated with some exaggeration, but quite effectively.

Sambhunath's other poems show a certain feeling of loss at the sweeping changes in society and social values when

nothing is as before, regret at the passing of youth, pre-occupation with memories, sad and sweet coming on in waves, bewilderment at the so-called progress, which to him means increasing confusion, increasing darkness, increasing violence and increase in weapons of war, love of his motherland (impelling him to call on a fellow-poet to light lamps of hope in the shrouded dark corners of Dogra hills) and romantic feelings of sadness and suffering in sympathy with the waiting lover separated from her beloved, with her pain increased by the gathering clouds and the dancing birds in the season of spring, Basant. Sambhunath seems to enjoy painting simple pictures of Dogra life with care and love; it appears as if nature stands still to watch his painting and is wet with tears of suffering, herself giving forth mists of feeling to his words. Among such paintings can be counted those of 'Phūlān'; the Gorī of 'Bakkkariā bakkhariā ruttān', who on her way to fill water at the well raises waves of laughter with her steps; the old woman, pale and worn, with shaking neck who watches her play with water; and the widow who fills her hands with sand in an attempt to collect her scattered hopes and prepares to burn herself on the pyre of her husband on the bank of the Tawi in the thickening dusk.

5

Tara Samailpuri, Onkar Singh Guleri Āwārā, Kehari Singh Madhukar were in their early twenties and Padma was only fifteen when they burst on the Dogri literary scene, with great enthusiasm and promise. Work of Tara and Awara does not show the felicity of happy phrase and bubbling flow of Madhukar's poetry or the feminine charm and emotional richness of Padma's compositions but it has seriousness of approach and stamp of individuality. While Tara came from the Kandī area of Sāmbā, Awara came from the hills of Kangra and the backgrounds of their birth-places are reflected

in their poetry. The subjects of Tara's poetry are drawn from life in the Kandī, those of Awara are concerned with the birds of Kangra and the hills of Dharmasala. Tara published a collection of 15 poems entitled *Fouji Pensioner*, Awara's seven poems appeared in *Magadhuli*. The poetry of Tara is concerned with social themes. Awara's poetry is individualistic and intensely personal with the result that his poems are wrapped up in threads of sadness and introspection.

Tara wrote about the heroes of 1857 and Dogra hero Miān Dīdo. He also dealt with the contemporary social situation where selfishness, exploitation, sycophancy and poverty co-existed with callousness of the well-to-do and idleness of the rich, the changing times and the disillusionment following Independence but he had greater success while dealing with the human and natural scene of his native Kandī, as in poems entitled 'Fauji Pensioner', 'Kandī da bassanā', 'Bārān Māh te Bahārān', 'Kundaliān' and 'Jādūjariān'. The last mentioned poem describes the superstitions of people of Kandī and how a hysteric sick woman is beaten and made to dance to exhaustion and smell chilli smoke to drive away the ghost. 'Kandī dā bassanā' describes the life of the Kandī—the great want and scarcity of water with people subsisting on pond water—'not water, but the distillation of herbs'. Life of the Kandī with poisonous snakes, scorpions and other insects, the scorching heat of summer, scarcity of water and fodder is really very hard. 'Fauji Pensioner' is a very touching and rather exaggerated picture of a retired soldier, who fought during the First World War—war-scarred face, parched tongue, shrivelled body, bruised knees and feet, deep sunken eyes, slow halting steps, the belly and the back with very little in between, a lifeless body moving with difficulty, bearing marks of bayonet and bullet wounds, his tattered uniform and torn canvas shoes and on his chest the medals which he had won during the war and of which he was proud even now, who on his way to the town to get a pension of Rs. 5/- drops down dead in the heat of Kandī. Progress of seasons

through the twelve months is very beautifully described. In the month of Chaitra, wheat heavy with corn is like the Goris burdened with youth and Baisākhī comes dancing with the jingle of bells. In the heat of Āshād, flowing streams get startled and arrested in their courses and the pines sigh and the earth turns copper-red. In Shravan, the sky opens the flood-gates of an ocean and there is water everywhere and rivers and *nāllās* are filled with overflowing youthfulness. In Asuj, night decks grass with pearls and winter is terrible with biting cold breeze and unending rains. In the end, Phalgun comes, the queen of seasons with the music of bumble bees and the songs of shepherds and multi-coloured flowers.

Awara does not seem to have much love for the world of men and women which to him appears to be a big market place where everything is on sale—man's faith, his honour, humanity, God, love, youth, art, poetry and everything, where hard work does not get rewarded but corrupt practices have a field-day. He questions as to how a thief becomes a thief and analyses the various factors—sickness of the son, extreme penury, lack of sympathy from society. He flinches from facing society and finds satisfaction in the world of memories and reflections which centre round Dharamsala with its high hills and tall pines and *deodars* and the music of water-falls and rivers. He describes these with feeling. According to him, Dharamsala has been fondled by the daughters of the mountains, fanned by pines and *deodars*, sung to by streams, decked green by goddesses and her hair has been done by moonlight and her eyes have been collyriumed by the night. The poet's imagination here is on familiar ground and he begins to reflect at the slow passage of life which is short, on love which is an illusion of the mind, on beauty which lies in the eyes of the beholder and on tears—salt-drops of the mind, yearnings of the heart, invaluable pearls of the ocean of the mind, spring flowering of the eyes, the rainy seasons of a heart aflame. He seeks identification with the bird and finds the secret of life in wandering alone like a bird. He finds beauty, youth,

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songs, affection, worldly grace, hills, streams—all chains of illusion and his heart trembles like a leaf in the breeze and his eyes get filled with tears, but he goes on like a stream. There is an element of sentimentalism and brooding sadness in the poems of Awara. His style is simple and gives glimpses of Kangra idiom of speech.

Padma has the distinction of being the first modern Dogri poetess and her very first poems written at the age of 14 or 15 showed remarkable intelligence, imagination and sensitivity. The selection of poems called *Madhukan* carried eight of her poems and the collection entitled *1857* one poem. In the last mentioned poem she exhibited a greater maturity of feeling and expression than that exhibited by other poets with greater experience. In her poem, there is no such exuberance of expression as found in poems describing 'the intoxication of the month of August' or eulogising martyrs or singing the praise of their sacrifices. She goes straight to the heart of the subject after touching all these in one or two lines and compares the year of the last century with 57 of this century and stresses the importance of sacrifice in both. Where in 1857 there was need for sacrifice to fight the enemy, to-day there is need for sacrifice to establish peace in the country for development of art, music and social welfare. While others wrote several poems on the love for the country, she wrote only a four-line stanza on the subject, which is remarkable for its succinctness.

Yearning for the moon and the state of human heart in love form the subject of six other poems of hers. In 'Geet' and 'Ichheyā', Padma desires to touch the sky with her tender feet, to snatch the tantalising stars from the moon and to pluck the beauty of the heartless, but then she casts an eye on her own condition and finds that she is like a light that has been snatched and thrown in the wilderness, like a doe crying for water in the desert and worn, weary and hopelessly waiting for her lover :

Tere hathen ne phatṭā dabaṭṭarū see-see

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Mukkane cha āylān neīn leendrān nīn

There is no end to the shreds into which you have torn my *dupattā* and I am tired of stitching it.

The dreams and tender imaginary flights of fancy of the poetess fall to the ground in the face of realities of life, but she has unlimited courage to bear and suffer and this courage is seen in her poem "Rāje diyān maṇḍiān". Combined with courage, one sees in this poem helpless rebellion and an intuitive understanding of the state of exploitation of the poor by the powerful. The description of these feelings in the poem carries the hard core of reality wrapped in soft silver threads and it is very effective and forceful and goes straight to the heart. To whom do these princely palaces belong? To those whose sickles snipped off the tender twig of her *suhāg* when the tree of her youth had not yet put forth buds. These palaces are symbolic of the loaded mares of those who snatched away the meals from the mouth of the poor woman, sucked her unformed blood and took away everything she had after striking at her trembling hands. These palaces are edifices which were built by poor labourers working in the blazing sun, who shed streams of sweat while constructing them and the bricks of these palaces remind one of the blood of the poor workers. Diwali is being celebrated in these palaces by lighting lamps as if with the blood of the poor and our hearts break as we look at the fire-works and our children gaze at them puzzled :

*Sāhre manā de tārādū trutade neen
Jiliāi bumb samanai par suṭṭade neen
Jinhen gī sāhre gillū biṭ biṭ dikkhan
oh shail deyalīyān tundiyaṅ nan.*

Compared to Tara, Awara and Padma, Madhukar's contribution to Dogri poetry during this decade is greater quantitatively and no smaller qualitatively. 26 poems of his appeared in print—16 in this book *Namiyān Minjraṅ* and 10 in collections and *Namichetana*. Fifteen of these are concerned

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with social and political problems while the other eleven are concerned with subjects like love, humanity, patriotism, festivals, small girls at play, the spinning wheel, palanquin and so on. The first category of poems is full of sentimentalism overbrimming with words, slogan-mongering, advice-giving and so on, while those of the second category show a certain depth of feeling and beauty of expression. In some, there is a sad haunting music, in others richness of imagination and in some others a width of vision. In the poems dealing with political and social subjects, Madhukar has tried to give a historical perspective to his subjects as in 'Papā ālī punnā ālī batta bakho bakh ai'. He thinks that there is need for re-writing history as the existing history is just a list of genealogical trees of Rājās and Mahārājas with their praises. So far men have been going on like bullocks tied to the oil-mill with their eyes blindfolded with shells of faith and superstition, in helplessness, but the renaissance has awakened the whole country and the new songs and the new light will change the old ways. Although the spirit of renaissance has not fully penetrated and the flowers of new consciousness have not yet fully bloomed, yet the breezes are soaked with new smells and revolution is in the air. The poet feels that there is need for unity, because one is one and one plus one make eleven and drops of water make a river and little threads of cotton make cloth and small bits of mud make walls. For social change, unity and courage are needed. The poet feels that war is a big scourge and during war the flowers of love turn into flames, mothers forget their cradle-songs and the lamps of humanity are snuffed and therefore, there is need for peace. Madhukar is optimistic and has faith in humanity. In one poem entitled 'Manukhatā', he says that humanity is eternal, the ocean of love never dries up and the hope of man remains ever green. but the breezes of sentimentality give wings to his imagination and he sees reflections of deathlessness of humanity in the gold of sun's rays removing the tents of darkness in the fields of the sky, in the solidity of the Himalayas standing

firm in the storm of death, in the flame of devotion or Sāadhanā, in the light of the moon of hope, in the musical laughter rich with perfume and in the flame of hope standing up against the anger of heaven. There is greater intensity of emotion and exuberance of imagination in his poems dealing with the theme of love. The speech of eyes is difficult to decipher but gestures of love flowing from them make the heart beat faster and when the lover is away in a distant land, the beloved feels very sad. In the pitch-dark night, the clouds rain fire and the lightning is frightening and when the wind beats at the doors, it appears as if the lover has come back to her. Falling in love is like filling one's lap with thorns and contracting a disease of the mind, when the desires get mad and tears are not enough to quench the fire burning in the heart and the river and the cuckoo bird and *papiya* and *chakor* birds appear stung with love to the one love-lorn and separated from the lover. There is a strange sadness and magic in the dolls play of small girls which is so popular in this region and so tenderly pictured in 'Juge dī Ās'. 'Dolī' is another beautiful poem describing the state of mind of a newly-wed bride about to leave her parents' house. The mother who collects her daughter like a lost hope in her lap, the father, the familiar court-yard and street, the shadows of trees calling to her and the arms of creepers spreading towards her, all come alive in Madhukar's poem. It appears to him that bangles and the nose-ring have become chains for the girl and her youth has become her own enemy. She is torn between pulls of her new relationship and old associations and affiliations :

Dor namī mana bhāī pī bī pahli tār nein truṭadi
Agalī manjal āle mārāi, pichhali tāng nein chhuṭadi.

But this is inevitable, as this is the way of life.

In 'Chann Tāre dharat ek samān', the poet experiences the same music in the whole universe above the din of society, country and humanity. It is a very fine concept and the poet

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has delineated it in small word-pictures very competently. In the stillness of night when the stars go to sleep, the earth seems to sing the song of unity of the moon and the stars and the earth. The clouds of the sky, the tears of the clouds, flowers, bees, streams producing music from the heads of stones, hearts of men full of compassion and love—are all united in one song which is full of joy and the pain of love. In the poem 'Banjārā', the poet becomes a salesman of songs and his songs are composed of regrets and hopes and gestures and sighs and cries and pain and memories treasured in human hearts.

In poems like 'Dolī', 'Banjārā', 'Chann Tāre Dharat' and 'Bhalī Suliya Jinda Tangoī', there is a happy synthesis of idea, feeling, music, style and words and a certain maturity of artistry and thought. Two features of Madhukar's poetic style are apparent—either he takes up the matter and then illustrates it with examples in extending circles, like the waves created by fall of a stone in still waters, or he tries to present a subject in contrast. His sentimentality and lack of economy of expression sometimes tend to spoil the effect, the subject gets submerged in a flood of words and images bathed in sentimentality and exuberance which seem to overflow the bounds of literary discipline.

6

In the field of short story, this decade threw up seven short story writers and five collections of short stories. While Dharm Chand Prashant and Kavi Ratna published a story each in *Namichetana*, Lalita Mehta, Ved Rāhi, Ram Kumar Abrol, Madan Mohan Sharma and Narendra Khajuria published a collection of stories each.

Prashant's story 'Kheerlī bal' is a retelling of a well-known legend about prince Ratnadeva of Janghānu and the whirlpool in the river Tawi flowing below Janghānu which

takes place once every 20 years in the midst of tell-tale sounds of mysterious weeping from the river-side temple and sighing of wind and the water of the river at the spot becoming red and the sacrificial devouring of a young couple by the furious river. There is always a boat available and the boatman is one Gokul, an old man of 65. The story describes how on a particular night the only son of Gokul and his young wife came to him and that particular night happens to be the night of sacrifice and when the crucial moment arrives and the river sighs, prince Ratna Dev arrives there with a princess kidnapped from the neighbouring kingdom of Rassials and how knowing fully well that the river will devour a young man and a young woman, Gokul puts his son and daughter-in-law in the boat and pushes it into the river to save the prince and his beloved, who had sought shelter with him and who were pursued by the troops of Rassials. There is suspense, a good bit of characterisation in the delineation of Gokul and a streak of idealism about loyalty of subjects towards their rulers at supreme personal sacrifice.

Kavi Ratna's story 'Sherū' is about a Dogra village and the quiet conflict between the village chief and one of the villagers. Sherū, a dog belonging to the villager, who guards the whole village and is dear to all, becomes a victim of the village chief's ire. The villager could not express his feelings of revolt and anger towards the Chaudhari, but the dog Sheru never liked the Chaudhari and when he bit the Chaudhari, the Chaudhari took his life. Here is a different kind of idealism revolting against social inequalities and highlighting the helplessness of the weaker sections of society.

Lalita Mehta's seven stories collected in *Suīdhāgā* are also concerned with rural Duggar and the poverty of life there. It is strange that characters in most of these stories get cheated of even small happiness. Fate seems to have spread dark clouds over the skies of the locale of these stories. Only in two of the seven stories the silver lining of courage in the face of difficulties shines out in the surrounding clouds of

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darkness. Kirpū is a poor farmer, who goes to the village fair and borrowing Rs.20/-from his friend, Shibbū, he buys an artificial silk shirt for his wife, Prīto. There is talk about the silk shirt in the neighbourhood, but the wish of Prīto to wear the shirt on the occasion of some marriage or festival remains unfulfilled; the shirt is stolen. The house of Chabhu is known throughout the village for domestic bliss and family harmony and Chabhu is proud of it but he is shocked when he hears his two daughters-in-law shouting at each other and not only his pride but he also breaks. The problem of pleasing her small child on the occasion of a fair rises like an insurmountable mountain for a poor widow, who has only seven pice in her bag and does not know whether to buy a piece of sweet or a toy for the child. If she buys him a toy, then how can she fulfil his wish to ride a merry-go-round and how will she tell the child the truth. She leaves the child in the fair and runs home in confusion and the child keeps waiting for her in the hope that when his mother comes he will have a ride on the merry-go-round. A widow lives in the hope that her only son will grow and she builds castles in the air and the eight-year old son Gopu earns six pice one day by selling a bundle of firewood, but on the second day, when he goes with another bundle nobody purchases it and when he returns home in the dark, he is caught in a storm and thrown in a dry bed of a river and dies. A three-year old girl Bishni loses her mother and her step-mother troubles her a lot; when she grows up, she is married off to a middle-aged widower. The girl does not know what to do and asks for death and death comes in the shape of a snake-bite when she has hidden herself in the inner room. The deaths of Gopu and Bishni appear to be slightly unnatural and contrived and it appears that the writer has dipped her quill in the dark colours of death and coloured the world of Gopu, Gopu's mother and Bishni in pitch-black colours.

Stories 'Bebū' and 'Suīdhāgā' are idealistic. Bebū is the picture of a brave self-confident Dogra woman who loves her

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house and her field, her dresses and her food and does not get involved with the problems of her sons and their wives, and is so self-confident in herself that living alone she is not afraid of dacoits or wild animals. Tara of 'Suīdhāgā' is a Dogra girl who stands on her own feet and who creates a place for herself in society with her hard work and her art. She knows the use of thread and needle and makes beautiful things with them and she not only makes a name for herself with her art but also earns honour and money for her livelihood.

The style of Lalita Mehta is simple and the language of her stories is the language spoken in Dogra villages but the plot and characterisation are rather thin, and her approach is more idealistic than realistic.

Ved Rahi's collection of short stories called *Kāle Hath* also contains seven stories. The locale of five of these is some colony or mohalla of Jammu city. One of them is set partly in the city and partly in a village and the other one has for its setting a hospital. The characters of the stories are a widow, an old man, a Kashmiri labourer, a teacher, a village girl married in a city and her younger brother who is hungry for her affection and a lady doctor suffering from a complex about her dark hands. Each character carries within himself or herself a problem arising out of his or her social situation and the development of the plot unties the knots of the problem.

The widow of the story 'Munnā dā kurtā' is seen always cheerful and happy as if she is not sad about her state of widowhood. But she does not allow her grandson to come near her and she gets sad and irritated if her daughter-in-law leaves the child with her. And when this grandchild passes away the sources of her cheerfulness and happiness suddenly dry up and she begins to wilt and wither and shrink in her shell until she talks like a mad woman. The story reveals the love of the old woman for the grandchild. Tātto is respected very much in his neighbourhood and everybody is afraid of

him, because people think that he has lots of money. But really he has no money; he has only filled some boxes with some stone pieces and the people think that he has boxes full of rupees. When the illusion is broken all the respect and awe for him disappear. Toshī begins to cherish pity and compassion towards the neighbour Kashmiri labourer Hāto's son and the beatings he receives from his father make her restless in her bed. One day, she gets a little piece of work done by the labourer's son, but does not pay him, because his father had instructed him not to accept any money and she did not want that he should get a beating again. And she is shocked that the boy is beaten precisely for not accepting remuneration for his work. Ratna of the story 'Chhiṭṭ' begins to suspect her husband who gives tuition to a young girl Kanta and this suspicion deepens in the mind of the teacher also when Kanta talks in a humorous, but insinuating tone. But this suspicion melts away with the development of the story, when the teacher learns from his wife that Kanta has written a love letter to her brother. Nisha of the story 'Kale Hāth' suffers from the complex of the dark hands from her childhood when her friend did not marry her male-doll with Nisha's female-doll because of the latter's dark hands and this deepened when she herself could not be married because of her dark hands and the bridegroom is married to her sister to save the situation. But with the same dark hands she saves the life of the man who had refused to marry her. Gopi of the story, 'Behenū de ghar', carries within his heart deep affection for his sister married in the town and his illusion about his sister's love for him is shattered when he goes to her house. The story 'Lehrān' shows the changing waves of love and hatred. Two children quarrel and the waves of their quarrel spread to their mothers who pass them on to their husbands who are brothers and who decide to separate from each other. But seeing their children playing with each other again the waves subside and they change their minds.

Ved Rahi's language is urban and his style is appropriate

to the development of the plots and delineation of the characters of the stories. Deep humanism, psychological insight and maturity of craftsmanship are qualities which mark Ved Rahi as a very promising short story writer.

Ram Kumer Abrol, Madan Mohan and Narendra Khajuria have mainly Dogra village as the milieu of their stories and there is a streak of sentimentality and idealism in their handling of the subjects which can be seen even from the titles of some of the stories like 'The Price of self-respect', 'The Debt of patriotism', 'Foot-prints', 'Daughter of the soil' and so on. Madan Mohan's descriptions reveal a certain lack of first-hand knowledge of the rural terrain. Khajuria seems to have certain felicity of expression and feeling for words. Abrol is more idealistic and moralistic than the other two. All the three show social awareness and reformatory zeal.

One of the stories of Abrol deals with the division of fields in which the love of an old woman for her fields has been shown. For her and for her daughter-in-law their fields are everything and when her grandsons divide the fields, she jumps from a ridge and kills herself. The grandchildren realise their mistake after her death and they unite the fields again and start tilling them together. 'Bānkā Pehalwān' is a good story which shows that a rough and forbidding exterior can harbour a tender and vulnerable heart. The ray of beauty of the girl who is betrothed to his enemy melts away the feeling of antagonism and hatred established in his heart and makes him compassionate. 'Gairatū dā mull' deals with the conflicting claims of love and self-respect in the background of vile designs of a 50-year old money-lender and his mean doings. The story 'Pairen de nishān' has behind it the idea of saving the fields from floods by doing *shramdān*. Ramu with the help of his neighbour resolves to put up a dam to save his fields from erosion, but he is washed away in the flood. The work started by him is, however, completed by the other people of the village. He leaves behind foot-prints walking on

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which the others complete the task. The importance of fields and their consolidation and improvement is a theme which runs through the stories of the book, named after the last-mentioned story.

Khīrlā Māhnū is a collection of six stories by Madan Mohan. Leaving the first story which is a lively recapitulation of a family quarrel of wives of two brothers living in one house, the other stories seem to have their subjects chosen with a purpose which shows up through the incidents and scenes from Dogra life, woven round it. The structure of the stories is rather loose and ends are not quite properly tied. 'Prāhchit' is concerned with avoidance of marriage and its responsibilities and acceptance of marriage with its joys. Punnū Chāchā living like a sādhu and Ratno Māsī, a widow, are carrying on a life of traditional values. One day they decide to marry not caring for the taunts and criticism of others. In this decision they embrace new values of life which give them new courage and new hope. 'Bhand' is the story of the village barber who makes fun of everybody and who is taught his lesson by the serious-minded village teacher, who gives him a long lecture on humanity and on the history of man and the greatness of man. 'Khīrlā Māhnū' is full of sentimentalism; the protagonist of the story sees in her son the image of her young handsome hero who went from village to village preaching for the freedom of the country, whose memory she cherishes and whose dreams of removing suffering and poverty from the face of this earth she expects her son to fulfil. Shanta of Sakolaṛe keeps waiting for a gift from her in-laws' house, burning in jealousy of her sister who is married in a village and whose in-laws send a rich present on the occasion of the festival. It appears that the writer tries to reach out for new values of life, but they get lost and broken against the strong walls of social structure.

Narendra Khajuria's collection of short stories entitled *Kole diyān leekrān* also contains six stories. The field of all the six is Dogra rural society in which value of money plays

strange tricks and carries forward the threads of the different stories. In the story 'Kole diyān Leekarān', the parents of a young girl sell her away for Rs.300/- without a tinge of remorse or affection for their daughter. The mother thinks that the girl is going cheap for Rs.300/- and the father thinks he would have been cheated of even this amount if she had run away with somebody. In 'Dhartī dī beṭī', a debt of Rs.500/- has made the life of Rami and her family a wretched experience. She can barely manage to keep the wolf away with 20 rupees sent to her every month by her husband who is serving away from home. Their piece of land is mortgaged to the village money-lender. She leaves behind her two children with her mother-in-law and goes to the city to work with some family and returns home after two years with Rs.500/- with which she gets her piece of land released from the money-lender. In 'Eh hasade basade lok', the girl from the village is made miserable by the taunts of the mother-in-law and sister-in-law, because her mother is a poor widow who cannot send presents like the other wives in the house, who are from rich families. The home-spun clothes and berries and pumpkins sent by her mother do not impress them and draw only derision from them. In 'Kī phull banī ge angāre', Fakiru, a brilliant boy who is fond of further studies cannot continue the studies because he has to work in the money-lender's house to repay some debt contracted by his father. Bhāgān of 'Dinawār' dies in the process of paying back the debt of the money-lender, her only son also goes to the money-lender besides her labour and her time. Gulabu of 'Paramesharā dī karani' who belongs to a backward poor community in a society caught in caste-ridden orthodoxy, where only money and high-caste are respected, dashes the hopes of his father and dies. Signs of changing society discernible here and there in these stories, however, glisten like the proverbial silver-lining in dark clouds, promising better days. Others in the story 'Hasade basade lok' may not understand the feelings of the village girl and may not appreciate the rustic presents sent by her mother but her

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husband appreciates them and understands her feelings and in a few days the appreciation of presents from the city also diminishes. Parents of Maya of 'Kole diyān Leekarān' may be without parental affection and consideration for the daughter, but she gets a loving, understanding husband. Gulabu may not have been able to change the society, but he creates a place for himself in the hearts of some of his pupils. The courage of the daughter of the earth is an inspiring example for others. The money-lender of 'Dinawār' and his son may not understand the value of the vote of Murku, but by the time he grows up times would have changed considerably. Fakiru may have been deprived of opportunities for education, but in coming times his intelligence may perhaps make him a leader of the downtrodden.

All the stories are in a general way interesting and the language has a flow and a rich texture embellished at places by metaphor and simile. At places there are patches of sentimentalism and linguistic embellishment which slow the movement of the stories. The author also shows here and there a tendency to jump in with his own ideas and his feelings, thus harming the inner structure of the story and its movement.

7

During the previous decade only one Dogri play was written and staged and it was *Bāwā Jitto*. But this play never appeared in print. During this decade, many radio plays were written and broadcast and two of them appeared in print. They were Ramnath Shastri's *Barobarī* and Prashant's *Devakā janam*. Two plays written for the stage were also published during this decade and they were *Namāgrān* written jointly by Ramnath Shastri, Deenoo Pant and Abrol and *Dhāren de attharū* by Ved Rahi. Thus there was addition of two other genres to Dogri literature—those of radio-play and stage-play.

Devakā Janam is the thinnest and the lightest of the four publications. In it an attempt has been made to weave the structure of a play from a legend popular in the region, based on the story of the birth of Devakā stream described in *Padma Purāṇa*. But the play lacks important elements of drama, that is, conflict or tension, human characters and a plot. The story runs like this. Rishi Kashyap is making preparations for a Yajna with the help of his two disciples in Shaunak and Gomukh at a place in Chenahinī. This place falls in the jurisdiction of a demon called Shuddhant. Shuddhant has obtained a boon from Lord Shiva after great penance and devotion to the effect that nobody would be able to kill him and this assurance has gone to his head. He stops Rishi Kashyap from doing this Yajna. Kashyap sends his two disciples to Shiva and Parvati. They go and tell Parvati that Shuddhant is putting obstacles in the performance of Yajna at her birth-place and at the place of her marriage. Parvati comes down to Chenahinī and challenges Shuddhant, who sticks to his guns. The attacks of Parvati's Trisul on Shuddhant go in vain and then Shiva comes down to help her and to kill Shuddhant, who is happy to die at the hands of his lord. Kashyap requests Parvati to make a river flow there and as soon as Parvati strikes the ground with her 'Trisul' a river starts flowing and Shiva gives it the name of 'Devakā'. Parvati desires to name that place Mahādev, but Shiva adds the name of his devotee to his own name and the place comes to be known as Shuddh Mahādev. This is the legend about the temple of Shuddh Mahādev and the river Devakā flowing by its side. The first scene shows preparations for the Yajna, and Shuddhant's opposition to the continuation of preparations. In the second, meeting of the disciples of Kashyap with Parvati in Shivlok is shown and in the third scene, descent of Parvati and Shiva on the earth, the death of Shuddhant and the birth of Devakā are shown. Shiv and Parvati are not human characters and if we consider Shuddhant as a human, then the conflict between Rishi

Kashyap and Shuddhant can be considered the central theme of the play. But the opposition of Shuddhant is only a pretext for him to obtain salvation at the hands of Shiva and the play does not show any other explanation for his opposition nor is there any development of the opposition shown. There is no development in the characters of Shuddhant or Kashyap with the progress of the play.

There is more drama in the social situation described in *Barobarī*. In five short scenes set in a Dogra village, the subject of social disparity has been worked out in interesting dialogues which help in delineation of character. Gian Chand and Gandarbhu stand for two levels of society, one representing the Zamindar and the other his tenant, one representing a well-to-do person and the other a farm-hand. It is true that during their childhood, they both played together, but social differences cut across their lives and minds completely. Gian Chand thinks at an intellectual level that human beings are all equal. But he sees that actually in life there is no such equality. His small daughter also thinks like him. Gandarbhu sees that while some leaders talk of equality of human beings and give lectures on it, there is no equality in reality and these leaders do not sit with the labourers and farmers and do not eat their food; separate food is prepared for them. There is a dichotomy between talk and doing, between thought and action. There is a tension and conflict between the two. All the characters help in the presentation of this fact of life in the background of rural setting in which old values and new values stand face to face. Even Gandarbu's small son Debu and Gian Chand's little daughter Usha contribute to the development of the theme.

The theme of *Namāgrān* also presents conflict of new values of life with those of old established social structure. But the play is not so successful. The movement of the plot is so slow that the tension gets diffused with the development. The characters instead of moving from an inner compulsion and living their own lives become vehicles of the ideas of the

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writers who fail to give a dramatic form to the theme of village reform by dovetailing the theme into the basic elements of drama.

Lājo is the central character of the play. At the beginning, she is away from the hero of the play Mādhō. But by the time the play comes to its end, she has come close to the hero. The movement of her mind and affections give a certain movement to the play. The second wave of movement of the play consists in the improvements in the village. In the beginning we find the village well in a bad condition, then Madhō improves it and under his inspiration other works of improvements are carried out. The character symbolising the opposite movement is Santoo and between these two conflicting movements Raseela and Banka are instrumental in the development of the plot. Lājo's father takes part in these movements and yet remains aloof. Sentimentalism, verbosity and a desire for the success of reform spoil the unity of impression of the play.

Dhāren de attharū is more successful than *Namāgrān* from the point of view of craftsmanship. This play deals with an evil practice current in Dogra villages, that is, the practice of marriage by barter and with the minimum of characters and minimum of dialogue, the simple plot moves naturally. No character or line of dialogue is superfluous. The setting is appropriate, dialogue is natural and helpful in revelation of character and development of the plot and the tension builds up slowly to a climax which appears all of a sudden. The movement in the first two acts is slow and then in the third and the last act it goes fast, so that the audience has no time to look aside or to question. This play also has an element of idealism and a purpose, but it is veiled and not so pronounced as in *Namāgrān*. Here the writer has subordinated his social purpose to the requirements of creative art and projected the problem with imagination and literary restraint.

Besides the verse translations mentioned earlier, three prose translations also appeared during this decade. In the beginning of the decade Kriparam Shastri's Dogri translation of *Durgā Sapta Shatī* from Sanskrit was published and two years later, Dogra Maṇḍal, Jammu, published a Dogri translation of *Sri Satyanārāyan Vrata Kathā*. The same year, Dogra Maṇḍāl brought out a Dogri translation of a Persian book *Gulabnāmā* by Dewan Kriparam as translated by Rao Rattan Singh and Kishnu Pant. These translations point to two elements in Dogra sensibility of the early fifties— a deep faith in Pauranic Hindu religion and pride in the military achievements of the Dogra hero Gulab Singh.

Sri Durgā Sapta Shatī is a collection of 700 slokas in 13 cantos in which the praises of many forms of Bhagavati have been sung. The book contains the Sanskrit originals and below each sloka its Dogri rendering. *Sri Satyanārāyan Vrata Kātha* describes the details of *pūjā* and along with the original Sanskrit there is a Dogri rendering given below.

Dogri *Gulabnāmā*, first part, is a translation of a portion of the original Persian. It consists of only 30 pages and deals with the history of the family of Mahārājā Gulab Singh, up to the period when Gulab Singh seeks service with Mahārājā Ranjit Singh of Lahore.

During this decade there was an attempt to publish a quarterly magazine and in July 1953 the first issue of the magazine was brought out by Dogra Maṇḍal, Delhi, in collaboration with Dogri Samstha, Jammu, under the title *Namichetana*. It was feared that a magazine entirely in Dogri might not be well received. Therefore, the first issue consisting of 48 pages had 25 pages in Dogri, 16 pages in Hindi

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and 7 pages in English. The second issue consisting of 52 pages had 33 pages in Dogri, nine in Hindi and 10 in English. The third issue contained 32 pages in Dogri, 10 in Hindi and six in English. After the third issue, the magazine stopped publication because sufficient number of subscribers was not forthcoming and the magazine was running at a loss. Towards the last years of this decade, the fourth issue of the magazine appeared from Jammu after a long interval. This contained 38 pages in Dogri, two in Hindi and three in English. This was the last issue of the magazine during this decade.

Through this magazine an attempt was made to present Dogri folk literature and Dogri contemporary writing and articles about Dogri art, language and literature, which were published in Hindi and English. With a view to creating interest for Dogri among the people, and to create an atmosphere of inspiration for writing in Dogri, writers were given space in the pages of the magazine and very useful articles on Dogri language by Dr Siddheshwar Verma and some articles on Dogri art, Dogri places of pilgrimage and Dogri literature first appeared in the pages of this magazine. The magazine helped in the development of Dogri literature to some extent.

In 1954-55, Kāngrā Sevak Sabhā, Delhi, brought out two or three issues of their annual which contained articles in Hindi and English. It also encouraged writing in the mother-tongue and announced prizes for essays on Dogri folk literature. In the 1955 issue of the journal, an article on Dogri folk-songs and sayings appeared in Hindi. This issue also carried two poems in Dogri by Lalit. This journal also stopped publication shortly, but it helped in creating interest among the Dogras of Kāngrā for their mother-tongue and it gave fillip to collection of folk-songs and to writing of some poems.

CHAPTER SIX

Dogri Writing of the Sixties : Years of Growth

I

1960's were years of a considerable measure of fulfilment for Dogri which was recognized as an independent modern literary language of India by the Sahitya Akademi in August 1969. There were also some other important developments and events during this decade which helped and shaped the growth of Dogri literature.

The J and K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages started taking more interest in and giving greater aid for Dogri publications with the result that more than double the number of books published in the previous decade was published during this decade. It also enlarged its publication activities and published collections of Dogri folk-songs, folk-tales, proverbs and idioms, selections of Dogri writing and a six-monthly journal *Shirāzā*. It gave financial subsidies to writers in Dogri, as publication assistance, published their works and commissioned writers for translation of a few selected books. It instituted awards for the best books published in this language as an incentive measure.

The J and K State Government recognized the desira-

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bility of introduction of Dogri as a medium of instruction in primary classes and the J and K University instituted three examinations of proficiency in Dogri, called Tilak, Praveen and Shiromanī. This led to preparation of some Dogri textbooks, increase in Dogri reading clientele and better sale of Dogri publications.

In 1962, Chinese aggression on Indian borders and later Indo-Pakistan conflict in 1965 had a deep impact on the lives of the Dogra people and touched the martial spirit and latent pride of the Dogras and their sense of patriotism which found expression in their writing of this period.

Dogri Samstha organized its first conference of Dogri writers in which progress in the field of Dogri language and literature was assessed and achievements of the past 20 years were critically examined.

All the cultural and social organizations of Dogras at Delhi formed a joint organization called Dogrā Himāchal Sanskriti Sangam. This organization helped in bringing together Dogras of the entire Duggar on one platform and establishing the linguistic and cultural identity of the region. Merger of Dogri-speaking areas of Punjab with Himachal Pradesh was welcomed by this organization by the issue of a Himachal Souvenir which carried specimens of Dogri writing and articles on Dogra culture, art and literature. This decade also saw growing interest of Dogras of Himachal Pradesh in their mother-tongue. Dogri poets of Jammu participated in a poets' gathering in Himachal and several writers from Himachal contributed to Dogri magazines coming out from Jammu.

Dogri was recognized as an independent language by a Committee of linguistic experts including Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Dr Babu Ram Saxena and Shri Meenakshi Sundaram. Unanimous recommendation of this Committee led to the recognition of the language by the Sahitya Akademi, which acted as a morale-booster to the few Dogri writers and speakers of Dogri language and instilled a sense of pride

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in them. It also generated enthusiasm for the mother-tongue among people of Himachal Pradesh and the Govt. of Himachal Pradesh decided on the establishment of an institution for the research and development of Dogri Pahāṛī dialects.

The spurt of creative activity in Dogri language saw, during this decade, the publication of about 100 books—26 of poetry, six of plays, three novels, ten collections of short stories, eight selections of essays, twenty-one translations in prose and six selections of contemporary Dogri writing, besides three magazines. A number of new writers entered the field of writing. There was an addition of new forms of literary expression like essay, literary criticism and novel to the forms already existing. Translations added greatly to the volume of Dogri literature.

2

The last decade had seen the appearance of 19 books of poetry but the total number of poets did not exceed 20. In this decade 27 books of poetry came to be published and the number of those who tried their hand in writing poems rose to more than 100.

Among the old poets and versifiers of the forties who continued to write during this decade were Deenoo Pant, Kishan Samailpuri, Ramnath Shastri, Ved Pal Deep, Yash Sharma and Almast. The contribution of Deenoo Pant and Kishan Samailpuri is limited to seven or eight minor poems each, and of Yash Sharma to three poems and eight songs, which appeared in magazines and selections. Their poems and songs on Sino-Indian and Indo-Pak conflicts are too topical and too devoid of literary merit to deserve mention. Poems in praise of the country and heroes also do not rise above cheap slogan-mongering and sugary sentimentalism. They seem to have nothing new to offer and the springs of their inspiration

appear to have dried up, except in three poems of Deenoo Pant and a few songs of Yash Sharma.

Yash Sharma's songs of this decade have the same haunting sadness and melodious quality as his songs of the fifties and they range over moods of tender memories of sounds and sights of his motherland, the *champak* bud-like beauty of a Dogra belle, the yearning of love-lorn hearts and the power and the beauty of songs that serve as beacon lights to wayfarers and sing of the playful smiles on the lips of the beloved that sets hearts aflame :

Geeten de dīyē bālī karī
Sura lānnā, surta neīn rauhndī aīn

I light lamps of my songs
And when I sing, I am lost!

Deenoo's three poems 'Milan Bichhoṛā', 'Nāle de āle' and 'Nheren neīn Nārāyaṇa Rauhnde' show him at his best but only partially. In both the former poems, he starts beautifully, waves exquisite pictures and then his imagination begins to fag and wilt. In 'Milan Bichhoṛā', the pictures of morning dew and the gold of flowering sunlight are pretty. In 'Nāle de āle' also the first one and a half stanzas projecting the picture of the stream with similes make its movement live, but thereafter his imagination and his creativity seem to get lost in his preoccupation with the starving cattle and parched fields and helplessness of farmers and his desire to take the stream to them. The poet becomes sentimental and this sentimentality strikes a false note. The third poem mentioned above does not suffer from this defect. In this the truth of the present day Dogra woman in the context of her predecessors and contemporaries in other parts of the world is forcefully and realistically drawn. There was Sāvitrī who retrieved her destiny from Yamarāj and there is Valentinā who has travelled in space and there are Dogra women passing their days in trivialities, engrossed in petty interests of daily problems like dowry and ornaments, still caught in con-

ventions and superstitions, left behind on the shores of time.

Ramnath Shastri did not bring out any collection of his poems during this decade also, although nearly 30 of his poems and ghazals appeared in magazines and selections. He, however, published two verse translations—those of Tagore's *Gitanjali* and Bhartrihari's *Vairāgya Śataka*. He translated Bhartrihari's *Śringāra Śataka* also and its publication in due course should add to the richness of the Dogri verse. What has been said about *Nīti Śataka* in the previous Chapter applies to this translation of *Vairāgya Śataka* also. The translation of *Gitanjali* is more musical and satisfactory. It is true that the beauty of feeling and music of the original Bengali have not been fully captured but still the translation has been fairly successful in gathering the spirit of the underlying philosophy of the songs, the play of omniscient and omnipresent God and the poet's devotion, love and wonder at that play. Songs Nos. 39, 45, 50, 54, 60, 64, 73 and 100 appear particularly beautiful in their Dogri apparel.

Ramnath's poems inspired by Sino-Indian and Indo-Pak conflicts are not very deeply-felt experiences but his composition in blank verse on the Himalaya is very powerful and effective. The poet feels that Himalaya, once the crown of India, an invincible barrier, abode of gods and a place of pilgrimage, is wounded and made to lick the dust, weeping on the corpses of multi-coloured flowers of national pride and all the truths about this great Himalaya have proved false and it has become, therefore, necessary to build a new Himalaya.

His ghazals and other poems describe his personal experiences and feelings—painful memories, hard realities of life, changing times and attitudes, uninhibited movement of sea-waves and moonlight and fragrance of flowers, truth full of fear, affection masking treachery, exhibitionism, the current fashions, and the poet's indifference to all these. The poet feels that with the coming of age, even flowers do not appeal to him and that things changing so fast, he does

not know what his destination is. Sometimes he feels that the sky of his mind is dark and empty and then a swan floating across spreads some light and fills it with forms and life calls out to him like the call of an infant or the call of youth and love held in a cage or the call of buds surrounded by bumble bees or the call of old age weeping over missed opportunities or the call of love for the motherland and the good of the world. These calls show the poet new ways. Sometimes the whispering bees tell him the secrets of life and love, of the stars and the moon, of the ocean and clouds and of the earth and virgin heart. Sometimes the poet tries to reach from the flower vases lying in his room to understand the pain and suffering of the people of Viet Nam and in place of the flower vases he sees the graves of young men and women sacrificing their lives for the country and the cactus on the roof of his house changes into a gun behind a bush. The poem about the calls is full of music, rhythm and beauty of words, while the poem about the breeze asking everybody about the secret of life is full of warm thoughts clothed in the traditions of Dogra values of life. The moon thinks that its borrowed light is responsible for its dark spots; that is why the moonlight looks like the faded laughter of a widow. The aim of the life of the ocean is to maintain its tradition and dignity. The cloud thirsts for the soul of the thirsty soil, and the virgin girl is the embodiment of nature and Mahamaya Shakti whose fulfilment lies in the play or perpetuation of life.

Vedpal Deep concentrated more on ghazals than poems during this period and he published a collection of 113 ghazals under the title *Asa te ān banjāre lok*. The field of these ghazals spreads over the whole gamut of human emotions like love, suffering, frustration, pride, patience and social commitment. They reveal Deep as a man of deep and abiding love, full of courage and dignity. The quality of his ghazals is uneven—some couplets are superb and full of deep meaning while others are empty words or mere imitative repetitions of worn-out sentiments that form the stock-in-

trade of Urdu ghazal. The influence of Ghalib and Firaq Gorakhpuri is fairly apparent. There is greater freshness in his poems like 'Kālā Māhnū' and the one about Indo-Pak conflict. Even in 'Namān juga', his imagination waxes eloquent and he thinks that like a song in the heart of the poet, music in the springs of veena, multi-coloured rain-bow in a drop of dew and like stars in the daylight sky, a new age is simmering in the present age and there is a bright future for humanity. 'Kālā Māhnū' depicts the Negro struggling to emancipate himself from the slavery of centuries. To the poet it appears that white civilization gets shaken in its shoes at the sight of the blackman. The poem 'Geet merā ikkalā neyln' is perhaps the most effective and beautiful Dogri poem about Indo-Pak and Sino-Indian conflicts because of its new method of approach, its universality of vision and its forceful style. The poet rises above the limited context of Duggar and talks of the fight for freedom in different stages and different countries. He chisels soldiers of words with the sharp edge of his pen, decorates them with rhythm and martial tunes, equips them with rhyme and infusing them with pulsating vibrant movement of thought, he directs them forward. The bullet that strikes Lumumba or some Vietnamese appears to tear the heart of the poet's songs and every letter that he writes seems to be armed with a sword and every song that he sings becomes an iron shield and the platoons of his words begin to quick march and then seem to run, still held by the discipline of the rhythm and it appears as if they are going to storm the citadel of the enemy. The language, diction, the movement are all appropriate to the subject and the poem is thought-provoking, serious and forceful.

Parmanand Almast published about 80 new poems and songs of his during this decade. 67 of them appeared in *Jhunak* and thirteen in various journals and selections. Most of them deal with four major themes—patriotic sentiment, musings on the problems of existence, random outpourings of the heart and poems of love.

The first type of poems were written in the background of Sino-Indian and Indo-Pakistan conflicts and they are full of slogan-mongering intended to rouse the people. Musings on problems of human life are also rather insipid; they are mere platitudes dressed in verse—mind is fickle and uncontrollable, time is all powerful, this world is an inn and man reaps what he sows and so on. His songs dealing with outpouring of the heart are simple and touching. But he is at his best in his songs of love which are bathed in loveliness and sweetness. He is very fond of describing the rainy season, the eyes of the Gori and the beauty of her form and figure and her various apparels:

*Sandhūr lapetiai makkhan lapetiai
Surtān mane bich bassiyān na
mokale sokale phirnavā de Ālare
daulatān johanī khaṭṭiyān na.*

Your face with the redness of vermillion and the softness of butter has made a nest in my heart. Behind your wide *phirana* (a kashmiri loose gown) you hide the wealth of your youth.

The subjects of these songs are drawn from common life and the songs patterned on folk-songs and sung with passion go straight to the heart of the common man.

3

Five poets of the fifties published collections of their poems and songs. They were Swami Brahmananda (*Brahmanand Bha-janmala*), Padma (*Meriyān kavitān mere geet*), Ramkumar Abrol (*Meriyān kavitān miriyān kahāniyān*), Sambhunath (*Dogri Rāmāyana*) and Madhukar (*Dolā kun ṭhappeyā*). Madhukar's Dogri translation of one hundred and one poems of Rabindranath Tagore (*Ekottarshatī*) was published by the J and K Academy. Two other poets of the last decade, viz.,

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Tārā Samailpuri and Durga Dutta also continued to write occasionally and their poems and ghazals appeared in magazines.

Brahmānand Bhajanmālā contains 78 Bhajans, 20 Dohās, and 27 Kavittas dealing with the same old theme of Dogri popular Vedānta which formed the subject of Swamiji's works published in the fifties. There is nothing new in the sentiments or in the way of presentation. This was Swamiji's last work and he passed away during this decade.

Padma's poetry is the poetry of the Dogra woman whose feelings and emotions, thoughts and problems and hopes and anxieties find expression in her poems. Most of her hundred poems, published during this decade, are soaked in feminine sentiment—nostalgic reminiscences of childhood, anxieties of budding youth, yearning for the lover, love of the soil and waiting. These poems seem to move with the slow but graceful steps of a young maiden weighed by the burden of her youth, walking with modesty. Her poems are perfumed with the mild sweet scent of the tender soil of her motherland and warmed by her love for Dogri, Dogra way of life and Dogra flora and fauna. She finds kinship with the berry tree in her courtyard in one poem and in another her mind, restless in separation from her beloved, begins to drown in the tides of the times and confusion of the country and looking at herself she begins to feel sad at her unfulfilled life:

*Nān jindārī paungarī, nān peelee
paṭṭa jharade na*

She is conscious of the sacrifices of Dogra women in the course of defence of the country and aggression of the enemy on the borders rouses her to exhort her people to meet the new challenges. Even in the darkest hour she does not lose hope and her patience in suffering is like the patience of the earth and her passion to be united with her lover and to get his love and be something is like that of the ocean on a full-moon night.

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In the poem 'Chhlaipā', there are beautiful pictures of nature, like those of eastern breeze singing a lullaby and playing round and round with the hill-tops, of transparent crystal-clear lake and bathed lotuses, the laughter of jasmine, the jingling silver bangles of the maiden dancing in the middle of the field, the smoke rising from the top of the mountain, the bashful awe-struck face behind the veil, lambs reaching upto the tops of the mountains with their eyes, the restless pines lost in thought and so on. In 'Des Nikala', there is a heavy streak of sentimentalism and the subject of the poem is wet with the remembrance of days in the mother's house when life was care-free and a perpetual play, singing songs in the company of friends, playing Krishna and Gopi, going to river to see it in flood, swimming in the shallow waters and seeing the growth of plants planted with her own hands and turning deaf ear to affectionate calls of the mother. 'Bhādro' is a very beautiful poem in which the feelings of the woman waiting for her separated lover in pouring rain are very imaginatively and sensitively delineated with nature becoming one with the woman.

Range of Padma's poems and songs is limited but within that range she is superb and the three poems mentioned are among her best and the most representative.

The hopes raised by Abrol by the poem 'Kavī te Kavitā' published in the previous decade seem to die with the ten poems of *Meriyān Kavitān*. The subjects of his poems—patriotism, poverty, man, national integration have been superficially treated and the poems are devoid of any poetic merit except one poem which describes the pain of love when the song of the Papīhā shatters the silence of the night and the breeze from the east breaks the hesitancy of the buds, prompting them to open the treasures of their beauty and fragrance.

Shambunath's *Dogri Rāmāyaṇ*, a book of 330 pages, is a solid contribution to Dogri poetry. It is not clear whether it is based on the *Vālmīkī Rāmāyaṇa* or the *Tulsī Rāmāyaṇa*. The

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author seems to have picked up certain elements suited to Dogra temperament from both and his stress is unevenly distributed. Two characteristics of the book are striking—beauty of descriptive passages and propagation of values of life rooted in Dogra tradition. Examples of the former may be found in the descriptive passages of the Phullwāri scene where Rāma and Sitā see each other for the first time, the scenes describing Sitā's going to garland Rāma, the condition of Janaka at the time of Sitā's departure, the happiness of Dasaratha's wives on the arrival of the princes in Ayodhyā, Bharata approaching Rāma in the forest barefooted and the one describing the condition of Rāma of his separation from Sitā. At some places there is exaggeration as in the description of fighting with Khumbakarna. The values stressed are those of the inevitability and inexorability of destiny, the virtues of an ideal wife, the infamy of life of dependence on others and the virtues of the brave.

Besides *Dogri Rāmāyaṇ*, Shambhunath contributed four poems and nine ghazals to various periodicals during this decade. The poems are in the familiar tune of praising the countrymen and the beauty of the motherland and the bravery of her soldiers. The poem 'Nirāshā' and the ghazals strike a note of sadness, melancholy and frustration.

Madhukar's *Dolā kun Thappeā* contains some of his best poems. He experimented with Dogri songs, bhajans and ghazals also but they are poor stuff compared to his poems here. His poems on love and rainy season strike a new note and a fresh approach, very much different from their treatment by Almast. For Madhukar, separation from the beloved is not an excuse for weeping and sorrowing and love is not a crippling bond for the lovers; on the other hand, stirring of the emotion of love is like the fall of a stone in a deep placid river, giving rise to waves reaching out after the beloved and frustrated and unrequited love is like the drying up of rain-bearing clouds of Shrāvaṇa or like the flickering of light in the lap of howling winds. His description of the clouds of Shrā-

vaṇa is very beautiful in the poems entitled 'Saun', 'Diggāl' and 'Sanhera':

*Joban de bhāren huṭṭi rī
Baddalen dī sejā suttī rī
Nāgan jana meendhī khullī rī
Khabare kisa sochā bhullī rī
Buddhe baba isa gāsā lei
dharati varamālā lei chalī—e.*

Weighed down by youth, lying on the bridal bed of clouds, with her tresses open and waving like snakes, lost in some thought, the earth is carrying a wedding garland for this old sky.

The picture of tender fledglings in the poem 'Kavitā Dī Pangtī' is very poetic. The mood of 'Dehrī' is full of brooding melancholy. The note of sadness runs through 'Dhruvtārā' also with smoke and darkness all round. But the mood of most of his poems is positive, optimistic, full of hope and confidence in the future and the goodness of human beings.

The sight of lamps burning in the temple, at the cross-roads and inside a home, makes him reflect on the secret of life. He sees various forms of life behind different aspects of nature; to the east of the village, there are berry trees, children, laughter and young growing life; to the north there are *kikkar* trees, young persons and love and spring; to the west there are shady banyan trees and worries, regrets and the approaching old age, and the wayfarer is standing on the cross-roads looking at the changing facets of life. The way—'Rastā'—tickles his imagination and looking back at the past, he wonders what man has made of the present.

'Chhālī', 'Saug', and 'Lehrān' are beautiful poems in which the poet sees behind the waves of water, the waves of the ocean of time:

*Jo lehar kanārā tappī jā
O lehar kanārā hoī jandī
Miṭṭī dī godā seī jandī
Miṭṭī de ranga rangoī jandī*

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The wave that crosses the bank goes beyond the bank and sleeps in the lap of the earth and becomes one with it.

There is a lot of exaggeration and over-brimming of imagination in 'Heele' where the poet compares moonlight with virgin laughter, and unwritten poem and uncut diamond and so on. But he is not oblivious to the creeping shadows around the moonlight. There is a certain devotional, spiritual urge to find God and be one with nature in the poem 'Panchhān' where the poet imagines that he catches glimpses of his past life and old *sanskaras* in the drizzle of rain and glimmer of lightning, in the songs of the waves and the breezes of the east, in the rainbow colour, in maiden's *sālū* and the tinkling of her bangles and in the castles of space and the corridors of time and his spiritual thirst gets intensified. 'Chhaliā' contains a very touching picture of a girl on the threshold of youth lost in dreams of the future. 'Hāmb' is a song of courage and hilarity in which lines appear to dance. And in 'Machhue di māyā', the poet sees the world as the fisherman's trade and songs in different languages as the orchestra of life. A certain depth of feeling and breadth of vision, full grasp over language, a happy combination of feeling and style, effective use of rhythm and rhyme and metaphor, and sentiment of hope and humanism are special characteristics of Madhukar's poems and songs.

Dogri verse translation of 101 selected poems of Rabindranath Tagore is an important contribution of Madhukar to Dogri verse. Dogri verses of some poems like 'Nirjhara dā swapnabhang', 'Bādhū', 'Meghadut', 'Basundharā', 'Sukhanā', 'Mandalagan', 'Pehli Pujā', 'Chainchalā', 'Tapabhang', 'Gharondi chetanā di godhuli belā' have come out very beautiful. Translations of some other pieces are not so good. The inspiration derived from Tagore is visible in Madhukar's original poems collected in *Dolā kun Thappeā*. Even the titles of two poems and the themes of a couple of poems and the general tenor of optimism found in his poetry appear to be inspired by Tagore.

Tara Samailpuri contributed about 15 new poems and

ghazals during this decade and most of these except a few couplets of his ghazals and the poems 'Mahārathī' and 'Kuthe ain kinyān tugi pukārān' are poor stuff. Same is the case with five or six poems of Durga Dutta Shastri. Tara has shown a certain awareness of social situation and touched it with a note of irony in a few couplets of his ghazals. In 'Mahārathī' he tries to point out the dangers of man's thoughtless pursuit of technology at the cost of nature and values of humanism and in 'Kuthe ain kinyān tugi pukārān' he grapples with the eternal search of man for God.

4

Of the 80 odd persons whose poems got published for the first time during this decade, only eight made a substantial contribution to Dogri poetry qualitatively or quantitatively and about a dozen showed some promise. These persons covered a wide range—Dr Karan Singh, a Union Cabinet Minister who wrote Dogri Bhajans, [Lal Chand Prarthi, a minister of Himachal Pradesh, who wrote poems in praise of his Himachal, professors, farmers, students, men from the professions and housewives and from areas extending from Simla through Mandi, Kangra, Nurpur to places like Rāmnagar, Bhadwal, Jandrāh in the interior of Jammu. While Barkat Pahari, Paras Ram Puroorva, Shrikant Pratyusha Guleri, Ram Krishna Shastri, Romal Singh Bhadwal, Amar Singh Adal, Shyamdutt Parag, Krishnadutt, Suteekshna Anandam, Shrimati Vimal, Champa Sharma and Shiela Santosh showed some promise of maturing with practice, Ramlal Sharma, Ramlal Papihā, Charan Singh, Narsingh Dev Jamwal, Mohanlal Sapolia, Peeyush Guleri, Gautam Vyāthit and Shiv Deep came out with collections of their poems.

Ramlal Sharma published two collections of his verse compositions—*Kiran* which contained 22 poems and *Indar Dhanakha* which contained 29 poems and 24 ghazals. In a

pedestrian, simple style he writes about the sentiment of love in its various forms, about changing seasons—Holi, Basant, summer and rain when dark clouds bring a new message of life and the laughter of lightning brightens the sides of hills, about the bounties of mother earth and the problems of the country, and about great men like Gandhi, Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. In some poems he tends to exaggerate and sentimentalise or preach like a reformer and in some, his similies are not quite apt. But some of his poems like 'Basant' 'Saverā' and 'Nadi' are pretty good in their delineation of nature and in the music of lines. Similarly, 'Kheḍ Samen di', 'Kuchajjī' and 'Ror' are also effective. The mood of his ghazals is more reflective than romantic and the subject-matter is didactic.

Ramlal Papiha is a farmer poet who published a collection of 19 poems entitled 'Lehrān'. His poems show traces of influence of his contemporaries Deenoo Pant and Tara Samailpuri and deal with old hackneyed subjects like Dogras and their valour, Duggar and her beauty and the twelve seasons and aspects of nature during the seasons, in an unsophisticated rustic style. Kedarnath Mishra is also a poet of rural Duggar and his poems are poems of moralistic intent. His collection of poems is called *Manai de Lau* and prayer to God, moral instruction, inevitability of death, tears of a widow and plight of a motherless daughter are some of the subjects of his verses.

The canvas of Charan Singh's collection of poems named 'Jot' is rather limited—hopes and frustrations of adolescent love, childhood memories and anxieties of daily existence, feelings of helplessness in the face of inevitability of death, almost religious devotion of first love and the heart-break on its failure—but the depth of his emotional experiences and the genuine, honest expression of this experience command attention. The poet tries to probe his inner being and brings out what he finds there. And his style is not inhibited; he experiments with different styles and schemes to suit the subject. He has a sensitiveness for nature and some of the pen-

pictures are very beautiful like the one of drops of dew in 'Chubbān', or the picture of smiling clouds embracing the hill-tops or moonlight eavesdropping in the courtyard of this earth. It is a pity that this young poet full of so much promise passed away at the tender age of 28 in June 1969. By that time he had written 20 more poems including some songs and ghazals which appeared in Dogri magazines and selections. In some of these like 'Lachārī' 'Ek puākhar, ek kandiyārī', 'Bāhnā', and 'Jeebān', he is preoccupied with the question of life and death. He wonders what life and its purpose are. He finds humanity imprisoned in a cage and man helpless. He observes that beauty, youth, love, music and all the so-called pleasures of life are illusory and useless and his own life appears to be meaningless and words mere jingle. The poems 'Nyānā' 'Soch Sirjanā', 'Holī', 'Daun Kingare' are perhaps his best poems and among the best Dogri poems of this decade. The poem 'Soch Sirjanā' is thought-provoking; the poet feels that mind is everything with its roots stretching deep down to the underworld and the top touching the heavens and self-realisation is to know the full contents of the mind. The description of evening in 'Daun Kingare' is full of creative imagination. The moon rising behind two mountain peaks and setting behind the palms in the west reminds him of his love which blossomed like moonlight and then disappeared and

We, like two peaks,
two trees of date-palm
Stood in the dark, like ghosts,
Holding fire in our hearts
Smouldering, silently
like green fire-wood.

Narsingh Deva Jamwal got two books of poetry published during this decade—one a collection of 29 poems and another a collection of 88 ghazals, named *Namī Kavītā Name Raste* and *Shamā jalāī kī dharakī dharakī* respectively. His ghazals are rather poor stuff, poor in creative imagination,

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poor in thought-content and poor in emotional appeal. The poems are better. 'Raste', 'Ansambī Kheḍ', 'Barsānt', 'Nikkā neā diā', 'Hirakh', 'Trai Sanyān' and 'Intazār' are good poems. For his subjects he has spread a wide enough net but all the subjects do not come alive.

Mohanlal Sapolia who emerged as a popular poet of the younger generation, particularly in poets' gatherings, published a collection of 31 poems under the title 'Sajare phull'. It contains poems of patriotic fervour (showing a preponderance of sentimental slogan-mongering) like 'Sārā Bhārath', 'Merā Des', 'Ḍiḍo', 'Shahid' and 'Koi Hog tān Akhog', poems dealing with aspects of Dogra countryside like 'Kandī' and Dogra farmer like 'Hālī', poems on subjects like hunger ('Phākā') and want ('Moortān') and reminiscences of days of first glimpses of the beloved and first tide of love (*Hār chare da preetān dā chhāllā leīe*) in poems like 'Yādān', 'Bhouṛān' and 'Do Teer', and poems of introspection like 'Meri Kahānī' and 'Jeevan Jot', 'Jawānī te Baṛhepā', 'Basan' and 'Pyār'. Sapolia has great promise which is revealed in poems like 'Sutti dī preet jagā karnā' and 'Chhālle'; in the former, there is a note of optimism and self-confidence and love of life and the poet identifies himself with a river, flowing freely in total self-abandon.

Dhartī de komal angen chā

sutti dī preet jagā karnān

(rousing love in the tender limbs of the soil)

Mautī shā jeewan pā karnān

Masti bich bagadā jā karnān

(drawing life from death I flow in self-abandon)

And he thinks that all the colours are illuminated for him, all the flowers have blossomed for his sake and all the musical instruments are being played for his pleasure and the moonlight is welcoming him with a smile; in the latter poem he draws a touching picture of a lonely dry leafless tree. This

promise can be fulfilled if he resists the temptation of playing to the gallery dealing with so-called popular subjects.

Shiv Deep is another young Dogri poet whose first publication entitled *Ek leekar keī parchhūme* containing 19 poems and 19 ghazals shows great promise. Inspired by Mohan Lal Sapolia to write Dogri poetry, he does not suffer from the defects of sentimentalism and slogan-mongering from which his master's verse suffers. His experience is limited but he looks around and within and makes an honest effort to delineate his observations and thoughts in simple but effective style. There is a certain freshness in his poems and a stance of courage and confidence to face and overcome difficulties. 'Nishchā', 'Chbālle', 'Leeka baleekar', 'Mana' and 'Heekhi' are good poems. His ghazals are comparatively poor.

The seeds of regional linguistic renaissance, which burgeoned in Jammu 25 years earlier, seem to have germinated in the Kangra soil with the publication of Peeyush Guleri's *Merā Desh Mhāchal* and Gautam Vyathit's *Chete*. There is a similarity in the sense of wonder at the beauty of motherland—Himāchal, Kangra and exuberance of emotional attachment for sights and sounds imbibed in childhood—Dhauladhār covered with snow, hills green with grass, streams singing, pines sighing, cuckoo cooing and beetles filling the moonlit night with music, beautiful belles and brave youngmen, Holi, Lohri and fairs and wrestling bouts, love-songs of Kunjū and Chainchalo and Bābū and Ishari and the tea-manager and the poor worker woman, flirtations between the *gorī* and her husband's brother, pain of separation from the lover who is away and yearning and hope and the glow of love in dark rainy nights and cold winters. Both in themes and style the poems of the two poets are very near folk-songs and many of them are inspired by popular Dogri folk-songs, and patterned on them. The language is simple Dogri as spoken in Kangra and other areas of Himachal around. Poems and songs of Vyathit have a flow and music

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like the flow and music of a hill-stream. This quality is not so evident in Guleri's poems.

5

The nineteen-sixties saw the appearance of 125 new stories and 20 new names in the field of Dogri short story. Six writers of the previous decade continued to write, one of them contributing as many as 30 stories but of the 20 new writers as many as 13 published no more than one story each.

B. P. Sathe, the pioneer of Dogri short story turned out just five stories—two dealing with rural Duggar and three woven out of his travels to Bombay, Madras and Vaishno Devi. The stories of rural Duggar—'Parokh' and 'Masāhnī'—are in his inimitable style of the best of *Pehlā Phull* and leave a deep impression on the mind of the reader, particularly the picture of Rahmat Bibi and the deep affection subsisting between her and the narrator. The other stories are poor stuff and the writer does not seem to be sure of his handling of the themes.

The new stories of Prashānt are also uneven in their craftsmanship and in themes they range from romantic love ('Chainchalo', 'Uchiān Dharān' and 'Akhar Misede ge'), Indo-Pakistan conflict ('Malaim Hath'), domestic tensions ('Jhumke') and legends of the heroic past or some semi-historical event. A subject like that of 'Khirlī Bal' appeals to him and he can handle romantic, heroic legends of the past better than problems of contemporary society which require realistic and psychological treatment. He feels happier in areas where fact and fancy, history and legend can be mixed suitably to create a story of suspense and an air of mystery. Stories of *Uchiān Dharān* are like that.

Ved Rahi is a more sincere and realistic story writer and a consummate artist. It is a pity that drawn away to Hindi short story, he was able to contribute only two short stories to Dogri during this decade. 'Āle' is better of the

two. It is the story of an old blind woman left behind alone by the villagers who have run away from the village on the eve of enemy attack. She goes about, stick in hand calling everybody she knew and getting no response. The delineation of her helplessness is symbolic of the helplessness of the village where there is not a soul to hear her cries. The whole life of the village is gradually unfolded through the aimless incoherent jabbering of the old woman in a very touching manner.

Ramkumar Abrol's five short stories are in the same old strain, showing his preoccupation with the social problems of Duggar, his idealism, and a certain purposefulness of approach. This is evident in stories like 'Chittarkār' dealing with the love of a princess for the narrator, 'Rāngale Hath' which describes the love of a youth of Goa for India and the love of a pretty fisherwoman for the youth, and 'Sābat Ādmi' which contrasts the attitudes of a foreign girl and a Dogri girl towards the sentiment of love.

Narendra Khajuria and Madan Mohan Sharma made the largest contribution to Dogri short story during this decade. Narendra Khajuria's stories are contained in two collections—*Neelā Ambar te Kāle Badal* and *Rochak Kahaniyān* and Madan Mohan's in *Chānanī Rāt* and *Taaren dī Lo*. Some of their stories appeared in journals also.

Narendra Khajuria broke new ground in *Rochak Kahaniyān*—a collection of 13 children's stories which have children for their characters, interests of children as their themes and children's world of make believe as their locale. They are didactic stories in the sense that they are designed to provide sugar-coated lesson-pills for children, highlighting devotion to study (as of Kamal and Prakash), spirit of adventure (as of Afzal, Ashok and Munshi), bravery (as of Tarak, Mohan, Jung Bahadur and Prema), superiority of knowledge and wisdom (as of Mohna and Sohna and Kishnu), and regard for truth and integrity (as of Ashoka). They also have the quality of being readable.

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Stories of *Neelā Ambar te Kāle Bādal* and those published in journals are more serious stuff and show the author's attempts to grapple with his social situation. Some of these stories are steeped too much in sentimentalism like 'Nātak dā hero' and 'Ma tū lori gā' which deal with patriotic sentiment and sacrifice for the country and 'Painchhi partoe par' and 'Kāstū dā kālā tittar' which deal with the theme of sacrifice for the beloved and living on memories of lost days. The story about Halima is also similar. There is evidence of greater social awareness and better craftsmanship combined with psychological interest in stories like 'Makade Lore Sailiān butiān', 'Sach jehrā trāme de patepar nein lakhoā', 'Neelā ambar Kāle Badal', 'Apanā apanā dharam', 'Saddaro dāi' and 'Dhuen ālā andar'. In these stories, one sees awareness of creeping social change, confrontation of old established values with new challenges and values and realities of life which shatter hopes and dreams. 'Ināmi kāhani', 'Ek Samhāl', 'Kavatā dā ant' and 'Ek pattar patajhar dā' are perhaps Narendra Khajuria's best stories of this decade. Besides social purpose, psychological interest and good craftsmanship, they are also rich in characterization. Premu of 'Ināmi Kāhani' and Nani of 'Ek Samhāl' are very tenderly and affectionately drawn characters that live in the reader's memory. So is Kavata, a sensitive beautiful woman, the central character of 'Kavata da ant', who got buried under the sacks of stores stacked for blackmarketing. So is the narrator of 'Ek pattar', an intelligent freedom-loving youth who allows himself to become an accomplice in an unethical act by deputising as a bridegroom for an ugly one-eyed lascivious young man. These last two stories have also the quality of symbolism and deeper meaning. The fate of Kavata is the fate of art in a commercial competitive society. The role of the narrator of 'Ek patar' is unfortunately the role played by many intellectuals, scientists, writers, top professionals for ugly, unscrupulous scheming politicians.

Deep humanism bordering on sentimentalism and psy-

chological probing of the mind continued to be the main strands of Madan Mohan Sharma's stories of this decade also but artistically they are much superior to his stories of the last decade. Even in a frivolous humorous story like 'Chār buddhe chār pariyān' he attempts to unfold the layers of hidden lust in the minds of old men. 'O' deals with the psychological reactions of having an unwanted child—a feeling of guilt towards the child and reproach towards self. 'Patharī' delineates the working of the mind of a woman waiting for an operation in a hospital and the fears and anxieties generated by the atmosphere there. Madan Mohan's other psychological stories are 'Merī galī dā pāp' (coloured dark by the wrong done to a poor widowed neighbour woman's only daughter), 'Koohek' (anxieties and worries of a retiring officer), 'Chār thamma churāsī barage' (the realisation of futility of self-sacrifice of a girl, who has missed the bus, on seeing her friend's marriage and her other married friends), 'Pāharī kām' (unfolding of the love of a maid-servant for a Pahari milk-boy and the stronger call of the mountains for the boy), 'Nand Shāh dī billī' (describing the shopkeeper's behaviour influenced by a latent desire for a child), 'Laltain' (showing a lantern-maker's clinging to life), 'Do lafāfe' (psychological reactions of receiving the first bribe) and 'Dhaunda ambar ullaradī bānh' (psychological workings of the mind of an unhappy officer rejected in love, of his meeting with a poor former childhood friend who has passed and is passing through greater tragedies and pathetic circumstances with a smile on his face). Larger number of the stories are drawn from life in town. In 'Kanakā de siṭṭe' and 'Joārī dā phull', however, the author tries to peep into the mind of the Dogra villager to find deep love and abiding loyalty. Locale of 'Chānanī Rāt' and 'Tāren dī lo' is also rural Duggar and in them the magic of moonlight and starlight working mysteriously on the human mind has been described lyrically and romantically. 'Mundu' is the story of a Dogra Pāhari domestic servant. 'Suraj Saddharo dā', 'Sippī-bijan motī' and 'Munsā-

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maravi' are also set in rural Duggar but the emphasis is on Dogra womanhood—idealised in Saddharo and penetratingly realistic and matter-of-fact in the two women of 'Sippi-bijan moti' (Tittaroo and her daughter-in-law) and Gaggari of 'Munsamaravi'. The deaf and dumb girl of 'Jalli' who was wronged by the respectable men of the village is an effective indictment on the Dogra rural society. The locale shifts to town again with the widow rāni of 'Raniji' which is a good example of characterization.

Madan Mohan's style is simple and effective. His language is unadorned and functional except in stories like 'Chā-nani Rāt' and 'Tāren dī lo' where some passages have a certain lyrical quality. His handling of certain social and psychological problems is very good and stories like 'Pathari', 'Jalli', 'Nand Shāh dī billi', 'Sippi-bijan moti', 'Meri gali dā pāp', and '0' are among the best Dogri stories of this decade.

6

Of the new Dogri short story writers of this decade, Narsingh Dev Jamwal made the largest contribution with 14 stories—nine of *Dhukhade Gohṭe*, three of *Tharmān Roz* and two published in Dogri journals. Four of these stories have Indo-Pakistan conflict of 1965 for their background, four have the town as their locale and six deal with life in rural Duggar. All the stories seem to have been written with a purpose and the avowed purpose of the writer is to present in Dogri language through Dogri characters, the culture of Dogras and their self-sacrifice and their social evils. Stories of Indo-Pak Conflict are of very limited interest and value. But his other stories are fairly satisfactory attempts in the direction of achievement of his declared objective. The characters of these stories have something smouldering in their minds and the writer attempts to fathom that something in words. Jamadar is burning inwardly with lack of love and affection in his life,

a town-family is burning with the desire for domestic peace and a village family is struggling to keep peace in spite of the quarrels and bickerings of the wives of the two brothers. Nainti is consumed with worry for the name and respect of her husband and his family, Major Kapur is worried and afraid of the consequences of corruption. Then there is the crumbling of love in Pushpa's heart and the fire of repentance in the heart of Kirpu and uneasiness of protest in the crippling relationship of Partiani. The attempts at portrayal are well-intentioned but the finished stories suffer somewhat from looseness of structure, element of sentimentalism and lack of literary discipline.

Shrivatsa Vikal published six short stories—all in journals. Two of these—'Sohnū' and 'Daraṭi dā phaṭṭa' are quite well-made and effective, the former presenting a good attempt at characterization of an orderly's son and the latter, the sad story of a young girl married to an old man. The other four stories (two of which have drivers as their central characters) are not so well-made. Chanchal Sharma's four stories, on the other hand, are all of a high standard and he has a certain knack of evoking atmosphere appropriate to the theme of his story. Thus in 'Bhūt charelān to dainin' the atmosphere of a lonely path in wilderness and the effect of fear on the mind of the wayfarer have been very effectively evoked in a brief and simple sketch; 'Baddi māli' is a good picture of a *chhinja* (wrestling fair) and the feelings of the villagers over the bout of the village wrestler with the wrestler from the town; 'Miṭṭi dī khadāl' is a psychological delineation of the mind of a man who has lost in love; and 'Gūṛhe ranga' is a pretty sketch of the domestic scene in a poor clerk's house against the background of a rainbow. Om Prakash Sharma also shows promise in his three stories—'Salāmatī Tain' (the story of heartlessness and commercial-mindedness of landlords of houses in towns and cities which result in the death of a poor young girl—the ward of a Kashmiri labourer), 'Lām' (pointing to horrors of war) and 'Sukkā Bārud' (the story of

helplessness of a poor farm-hand and his suicide).

Ramnath Shastri, the poet Swarnakār (who passed away prematurely) and Bandhu Sharma, contributed two stories each to Dogri journals during this period. Shastri's one story 'Garajde baddal te milakadi bijjalī' deals with the consequences of ill-matched marriages prevalent in the hills of Duggar. The story is didactic and there is condemnation and protest in the tone of the writer. His second story 'Triyā Akhanda pāṭh' attempts to show the power of words of the Guru to change human mind. Swarnakār's two stories are idealistic in tone—one describing the absolute integrity and large-heartedness of a low-paid watchman and the other the silent suffering of a devoted wife. Bandhu Sharma's stories—'Parshāme' and 'Leekar te pul'—have psychological interest and 'Parshāme', unfolding the attachment of an old woman for her shawl, is a very good story.

Thākar Poonchhi, the well-known Urdu short story writer's only Dogri story, 'Baraf de atthrū' is a good character-sketch of a peanut-seller. Mohanlal Sapolia, Charan Singh and Yash, the Dogri poets, also dabbled in short story and turned out a story each. Sapolia's story 'Chūhe dī maut' is full of satire and symbolism. Charan Singh's 'Kalpanā' is a good piece of self-analysis by confronting reality with fancy. Yash's 'Khālī Peppe' is a picture of helplessness of a clerk.

Others who contributed a story each during this decade are Neelambardev Sharma ('Pāhare dī kahānī'), Gopinath Kaushik ('Sukhnā'), Madan Singh Thakar ('Surga Seerhī'), Krishna Dutta Padha ('Shambhū dī bān'), Vijaya Suman ('Shrimānjī'), Kuldeep Singh Jamwal ('Baḍhī Suārī'), Keemati Lal Vijaya ('Moortī'), Krishna Lal Modi ('Faisalā') and Prakash Goswami ('Rāj-parat'). It is difficult to assess these new writers on the basis of one story each. But they do show promise and some of them show a keen sensitiveness to the social problems of Dogra society and a capacity to present these problems in an artistic form and question in a subtle way the social evils and inequalities as in the stories

of Neelambar and Prakash Goswami.

7

In the field of plays and one-act plays, there was an addition of two full-length plays, two translations of Hindi full-length plays and three of short plays of Tagore, 17 one-act plays including six radio-plays and seven one-act plays for children.

Deenoo Pant's *Sarpanch* and Ram Kumar Abrol's *Dehri*—the two original Dogri plays—are set in rural Duggar; the former centres round the legendary character of Dātā Ranū known for his uprightness and sense of justice and the latter describes the conflict between the village chief and an idealistic youth who revolts against old feudal system of exploitation of the poor by the well-to-do. Dātā Ranū is like Bāwā Jitto. He refuses to accept bribe from the chief and he refuses to be afraid of his wrath, when he has to give a just verdict which goes against the chief. He pays for it with his life but he becomes a martyr and lives in local legends to this day and the resting place of his ashes is a place of pilgrimage like the site of martyrdom of Jitto. The plot is rather thin and there are clear signs of its having been stretched in the nine scenes. Idealism and didactic approach spoil the flow of the dialogue and characterisation suffers from lack of natural development. The play is obviously inspired by a desire to project a favourable image of a hero of Dogra folklore. Abrol's *Dehri* also suffers from idealism, sentimentalism and weakness of characterisation. The theme of the play was earlier the subject of a short story written by the author and there is an attempt to paint the Choudhary, the village chief, in black and Shamu, the standard-bearer of revolt, in white. Choudhary has his eye on Shamu's sister Bela and he knows that Shamu's father owes him money and Shamu loves Choudhary's step-daughter Radha. Choudhary wants to take

advantage of the situation; he would let Shamu marry Radha in exchange for Bela's marriage with himself. Shamu is not prepared to give his young sister to an old man. He is prepared to wait and work hard in the field to raise more crops to repay the loan. Choudhary's demand for his sister's hand is a challenge to his self-respect and he fights until Choudhary's agents kill him. But his honour is vindicated. Choudhary is arrested but Radha, his beloved, becomes mad and the villagers erect a 'dehri' in the name of Shamu. Ram Kumar Abrol seems obsessed with two themes—condemnation of the evil practice of 'dohri' (marriage by barter) and revolt of self-respecting hardworking youngmen against the old feudal system, but he has not been able to synthesise them in the play and the characters of the play seem to be mere mouth-pieces of his ideas, not living characters with their own individualities. There is no inner cohesion in the play.

These plays show up all the more poorly in comparison with the Dogri translations of two very successful Hindi plays *Andhā Yug* of Dharamvir Bharati and *Āshād kā ek din* by Mohan Rakesh. *Andhā Yug* which deals with Gāndhari's curse and Krishna's death is in free verse in line with the original in Hindi and its message has some relevance to the contemporary dark age. *Mallikā*, the translation of *Āshād kā ek din*, is a romantic and sentimental play about Kalidasa and Mallika, the flame of his youth, who is supposed to have been the inspiration behind the lady characters of Kālidāsa's great dramas and his beautiful poem *Meghadūta*. Both the translations are fairly satisfactory.

Rabindranath Tagore's three plays translated into Dogri are *Visarjan* (titled *Balidān* in Dogri), *Dāk ghar* and *Mālinī*. They are sufficiently representative of Tagore's dramatic work and they look quite natural in their Dogri garb.

Of the 17 one-act plays published during this period, six have war as their background. Prashant's *Veer Zorāwar* is concerned with general Zorawar's campaign on Lhasa and others are inspired by Sino-Indian and Indo-Pak conflicts

of 1962 and 1965 respectively. The emphasis in plays like *Veer Zorawar* and Kavi Ratna's *Morche uppar*, Narasingh Dev Jamwal's *Ān Maryādā*, Yash's *Heekhiyān* and Madan Mohan's *Neech* is on the valour and self-respect and spirit of self-sacrifice and patriotism of Dogras. The last mentioned play is full of suspense. Jitendra's play *Kartabya* and Ramnath Shastri's *Barāṇḍī* highlight the problem of remarriage of young widows of those killed in war and suggest a solution in their marriage with their husbands' brothers. Characterization of these plays is rather poor and characters are palpably vehicles of the views of the writers.

Ramnath Shastri's *Nāthī dā Hotel*, Narendra Khajuria's *Aitwar dī Sair*, *Apāne parāye* and *Pyāsī dharatī*, Vishwanath Khajuria's *Ghunḍiān* and Madan Mohan's *Mautī dī chhāmā heṭh* and *Sarain* are plays with social themes and present interesting sidelights into the daily life of Dogras in town and the working of the minds of certain typical characters—a small town hotel-keeper, a clerk's family, a retired school-master, a retired officer and his wife in juxtaposition with a poor family of their own community, an old man and his educated daughter-in-law with conflicting approaches to the latter's son who is greatly attached to his grandfather; a clerk suffering from inferiority complex and frustration and a sense of imagined helplessness, a woman in revolt against her own social circle of empty leisure and sensual pleasure and moral debasement.

Madhukar's *Lehrān* is a verse-play on the love-legend of Kunju and Chainchalo which forms the subject of popular Dogri folklore. The plot is very slender but Madhukar has been able to weave it in musical notes to good effect. Jitendra's *Nhere dī tānī*, *sanjoge de mele* is an adaptation of a story of W. W. Jacobs and is quite gripping and effective.

Narendra Khajuria's *As bhāg jagāne āle ān* is a collection of seven one-act plays written with a purpose for children. These plays have children or/and birds and animals as dramatic personae and the purpose is didactic. *Buddhūrām* deals with

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the problem of rehabilitation of a backward boy. Similarly Mohan, the central character of one of these plays, is a handicapped boy—a stammerer. Others contain in them lessons for self-reliance and punctual and regular attendance in school and still others describe a mock parliament and the adventures of children. The plays are simple and interesting.

8

Dogri novel was born during this decade with the almost simultaneous appearance of three short novels—Madan Mohan's *Dhārān te dhooṛān*, Narendra Khajuria's *Shāno* and Ved Rahi's *Hār, berī, te pattan*. They were works of three most successful short story writers of Dogri of the last decade. They bear the impress of a deliberate effort to deal with the problems of rural Duggar and are in the nature of social tracts. The picture that emerges is one of an old feudal social order based on class distinctions with the well-to-do, the local chiefs and the moneylenders, exploiting the poor, and the growing consciousness of new socialistic values of human dignity and equality and freedom, battering on the rigid walls of entrenched social structure. There is a certain amateurishness in the novels, the canvass is narrow and the characters, particularly the women, are rather idealised, but the effort is worth its while and the novels are readable and interesting.

Hār, berī, te pattan is set in the very heart of Duggar, a village of Mansar-Saruinsar region. On the bank of the Tawi there is a village of Thakkars. Ramalu Thakkar, a soldier, returns to the village at the end of the World War II with one leg gone and finds his fields occupied by his relatives. After some litigation he gets a portion of them back and gets married to an intelligent girl of his community. But he passes away as soon as a son is born. His wife Maya looks after the fields and her son Ranu but she also dies when Ranu

is hardly nine. The relatives have their eye on the land but Maya's friend Kunto comes to look after Ranu and his land. She stands up to defeat the plans of the relatives who try to scandalise her. She also dies and the greedy heartless relative of Ranu's father tries to give his tender-aged daughter in exchange for a girl for himself and to get Ranu's land but his schemes are frustrated by Khairu, a low-caste neighbour of Maya and Kunto who was deeply devoted to Maya and Kunto, with the help of a gramasevak who arranges for Ranu's education in the town. The development of the plot of the novel is natural and the language is simple and idiomatic. Integration of the themes of condemnation of social evils of class exploitation and marriage by barter into the plot is smooth.

Shāno is the story of a brave, courageous and resourceful housewife who would not accept defeat in the worst of adverse circumstances. Her husband Shankar loses a leg and is assailed by fears and complexes but she gives him her love and respect and hope and self-confidence. With her savings from her stitching work she makes plans for raising an orchard, but the village chiefs—Sarnu Shah and Mehto Baji cannot bear to see anybody stand on his own feet and hold his head high and Shano's sewing machine and her orchard are taken away and their house is burnt by the scheming, jealous Shah and Mehto. Reduced to penury and hunger, Shano works for others and does odd jobs but does not lose heart. Her husband falls in bad company and starts drinking and suspecting his wife, but she weans him away with patience and tact and when it becomes unbearable to live in the village, she leaves the village with her husband and son. Both Shano and her husband get work and save some money and come back to retrieve their orchard from the moneylender. The situations and plot are palpably rigged up to create an idealised character. All the other characters, even Shano's husband, are shadowy and lack the ring of authenticity. There is an air of artificiality about the whole thing and false

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similies and sugary sentimental passages are particularly jarring.

Situations and characters of *Dhārān te dhurān* are realistically drawn. The novel deals with the confrontation of old feudal system and new social values and the crumbling of the former before the spread of the latter. The old order is represented in Shiv Dayal, the Raja of Ramagarhi, and his henchman Pandit Tikaram and representatives of the new order are Rasal Singh (an ex-soldier returned home to his village), Tulsiram (a poor but bright young man belonging to a backward section of the village) and Taro (a woman of easy virtue). There are other minor characters—Kamalo, the beloved of Rasal Singh, who is forcibly taken away from him and put in the Raja's harem and Rukmo, a village girl who is saved from marriage with an old moneylender in exchange for a debt of Rs. 200/- incurred by her father by the efforts of Rasal Singh and Tulsiram, but is taken by the Raja for his harem. The struggle ends in the deaths of Taro, Rasal Singh and the Raja. There is evidence of a sharp social awareness in the novel and the author shows himself ranked on the side of Rasal Singh and Taro. There is not much depth in characterisation and notes of idealistic, didactic, sentimental nature do not get dissolved in the plot.

A fourth novel or attempt at a novel was Dharam Chand Prashant's *Rukminī*. Its three instalments appeared serially in his magazine *Rekhā* and then the magazine stopped publication and nothing further was heard of this novel. Its central character Rukmini is a child widow, and the narration is in first person. It made a good start and promised to be interesting.

In the meantime, Dogri novel was enriched by three translations—Gorki's *Mother*, Saratchandra's *Duttā* and Premchand's *Godān*. The last of these is a substantial contribution to Dogri novel. *Godān* has been translated into several languages and is considered to be a great novel of rural Indian life. Dogri *Godān* done by Bhagwat Prasad Sathe

reads as well as the original and is a fairly good translation.

9

Like Dogri Novel, Dogri prose is a thing of the 1960's. *Tri-venī*—a joint venture of a husband and wife team—Shyamlal Sharma and Shakti Sharma—was the first book of Dogri essays; it appeared in 1961. Then during 1963 and 1964, D. C. Prashant brought out a purely Dogri magazine *Rekhā* which contributed a great deal to the development of Dogri prose. In 1964 the Cultural Academy of Jammu and Kashmir came forward with a programme of publishing an annual collection of Dogri literature and a six-monthly literary magazine *Shirāzā*. These gave a further fillip to the growth of Dogri prose and some of the essays that appeared in these formed the inspiration and foundation for Dogri books of essays that appeared subsequently in the latter half of the decade. About the same time Dogri Samstha brought out a collection of papers read at the first Dogri Writers' Conference in 1967 under the title *Dogrī Sāhitya Darpan* and a collection of Dogri essays called *Dogrī Lekh Mālā* and Lakshmi Narayan published a book on literature, *Dogrī Sāhitya Charchā. Namī Chetanā*, a quarterly magazine, also made its appearance again as an organ of Dogri Samstha, which offered opportunities to new writers and added further to the growth of Dogri prose. *Nibandhāvalī*, an organ of Dogri Research Institute, also carried some articles in Dogri.

Dogri prose writing of the decade can be dealt with under three main headings:

(a) Dogri essay of the nature of an article on a specific subject giving information;

(b) Dogri essay proper in the sense of a tentative, imaginative and personal treatment of a subject; and

(c) Dogri essay dealing with literature.

All the three types of Dogri prose showed the diverse

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possibilities and potentialities of Dogri language as a flexible vehicle for explaining a subject, for delineating a mood or a character or an atmosphere, for revealing an aspect of daily existence or a deep truth of life, for communicating emotion and for literary appreciation.

Nearly 30 persons wrote articles on various subjects ranging from Dogri language, Dogri culture, customs and traditions, places of tourist and pilgrimage interest, fairs, folklore, art, painting, temple sculpture and architecture, history and Dogra general Zorawar Singh and science. The largest number of articles was perhaps written on Dogri language and its problems by the largest number. Shyamlal Sharma in his schoolmaster style made Dogri language and the study of its features and problems a special field of his study. Others who wrote on Dogri language were Shakti Sharma, Satyapal Vatsa, Vishnu Dutta, Som Dutt, Devaprakash, Jagadish Sathe, Om Prakash, Bansilal Gupta and Ramnath Shastri. Dogra culture and traditions formed the subject of perceptive and interesting articles by Shakti Sharma, Vishwanath Khajuria, Ramlal Sharma, Ramnath Shastri and Suraj Saraf. Kedarnath Shastri, Shakti Sharma and Vishwanath Khajuria wrote scintillating prose and their articles were more than mere articles—they were literary essays showing creative and imaginative use of the language.

Only three books of essays proper appeared during the decade. They were Vishwanath Khajuria's *Duggar da jeewan darshan*, Lakshminarayan's *Kandiyāri de phull* and Shakti Sharma's *Syarhān*. The promise of literary genius shown by Shakti in her essays 'Bair te Biro' and 'Bassoān' and 'Tameez' in *Trivenī* was fulfilled in such essays of *Syarhān* as 'Seetā dā byāh', 'Mhisadiān Leekarān', 'Annī Āsthā', 'Chann', 'Soch', 'Channū' and 'Bhagen dā pher'. There is in them a depth of feeling, tinged at places by emotional exuberance combined with very effective use of Dogri language and wit and humour to evoke empathy and draw realistic pictures of Dogra life. In 'Channū', the style becomes lyrical at places

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and the pen-picture of Channu is tear-spilling. Her style is typically feminine with all the charm and appeal of a Dogra woman.

Lakshmi Narayan also makes effective use of Dogri to present picture of human foibles and weaknesses, wrapped as it were, in threads of ironic humour and witty broadsides. Some of his sketches like those of Hotelwālāh, Shāhji, Jakko-takkā and Tarunandā are memorable. 'Chharen dā Koṭha' is also an interesting and perceptive essay. The style is witty and idiomatic, but it suffers from lack of literary discipline and excessive use of idioms and phrases to make an effect with the result that some of his purple passages do not seem to have the ring of authenticity behind them.

Vishwanath Khajuria's essays like 'Chandrabbāgā dī ātmakathā', 'Bārābhaī hor', 'Khatolā apāne bare cha', 'Baihm' and 'Eh Nazarān' are charming pieces of literature, revelatory of the writer and interesting for the reader. His style is very personal. He is able to win the reader's willing sympathy and also recreate the way of life in Duggar that is already a thing of the past.

There were experiments in the writing of reminiscences, reportage and travelogue. Prof. Gaurishankar wrote a short reminiscent piece of his early associations with Padma Vibhushan Dr Siddheshwar Varma, Vijayu Suman recalled his early days on the stage in Jammu, Bhagwat Prasad Sathe wrote of his childhood days in Ramnagar, Padma wrote her memoirs of her hospitalisation in Srinagar and Vishwanath Khajuria recaptured in 'Merī diary de kish Pattare' and 'Pāhaī Yātrā' his memories of his life as a school teacher in 1931 and his visit to Dodda Basantgarh later. Madan Mohan's travelogue 'O ek safar' describing his journey from Ramnagar to Bhadravat is a beautiful essay. Ramnath Shastri's essay 'Chala manā deyā maujiyā' purporting to describe his journey from Dhaunthalī to Nagrota is more a peg to hang his reflections on than a travelogue. Yash Sharma wrote his observations of his journey from Pathankot to Kangra and Narayana Mishra

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wrote an essay on his flight to Leh and what he saw there. Narayana Datt Mishra also wrote a reportage on the first Dogri Writers' Conference and Narendra Khajuria wrote a report on the Dogri-Hindi Sammelan of Kangra.

Essays of literary appreciation also began with *Triveni* which carried Shyamlal Sharma's brief survey of Dogri literature and Shakti Sharma's essays on 'Woman in Dogri folk-songs'. In the pages of *Rekhā* appeared Krishna Jamwal's essays about Dogri folk-songs and a Dogri songstress, reviews of Dogri novel *Har Beri te Pattan*, Shambhunath's *Dogri Rāmāyana* and *Triveni* and an article on 'Absence of Children's Books' by Ramnath Shastri. *Shirāzā* and *Sārḥā Sahitya*, the two publications of J and K Cultural Academy, published several articles of literary appreciation and assessment. Bansilal Gupta wrote a very informative article on Dogri folk literature. This was followed by essays on 'Dogri proverbs' by Shyamlal Sharma, 'Dogri folk-tales' by Vishwanath Khajuria and 'Dogri folk-songs' by Shakti Sharma. Vishwanath Khajuria also wrote on 'Rain in Dogri folk-songs' and Baldev Singh wrote on 'Smoking in Dogri folk literature'. Late Charan Singh contributed a very informative essay on a Dogri poet 'Lakkhu' and Deenoo Pant wrote an appreciation of Brahmanand's poetry. Ramnath Shastri also touched on Brahmanand in his essay on Dogri poetry of devotion. Neelambardev Sharma traced the effect of Chinese attack on India on Dogri poetry. Chanchal Sharma also wrote an essay on Dogri poetry and Dogri novel. Prashant wrote an essay on Dogri Prose for the Dogri Research Institute Annual. Madan Mohan traced the development of Dogri prose in his paper contributed to the Dogri Writers' Conference. Shakti Sharma wrote an essay on Essay and Jitendra Sharma provided a perspective on radio-plays and a review of five one-act plays of *Panj-rang* with a background of Dogri stage traditions in one of his essays. While Neelambardev wrote about Bhagwat Prasad Sathe and his short stories, Sathe also wrote an appraisal of his own stories. Madan Mohan and Narendra

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attempted a look at characters of their own stories and Ramnath Shastri wrote an essay on Rasal Singh, the main character of Madan Mohan's novel *Dhārān te dhūrān*. Essays of Neelambardev Sharma, Madan Mohan and Ramnath Shastri are good examples of literary appreciation. Ramnath Shastri also wrote perceptive reviews of *Annā Yuga* and *As te ān banjāre lok*. The papers discussing various aspects of Dogri language, research and literature collected in *Dogrī Sāhitya Darpan* are also sincere attempts to assess the problems and development of Dogri language and literature till 1966.

Dogrī Sāhitya Charcha of Lakshmi Narayan deals more with theories of literature and literary forms and their features than with Dogri literature. The book appears to be a rehash of undigested material gathered from some English and Hindi books on principles of literary criticism and suffers from lack of adequate illustrations from Dogri writing. Champa Sharma's *Dogrī Kāvya Charchā*, on the other hand, is a good and more satisfying introduction to Dogri poetry, albeit too elementary, but full of illustrations and examples of features of poetry from published works.

10

There was considerable activity in the field of translation during this decade. Mention has already been made of verse translations and translations of plays and novels earlier. Other works translated into Dogri and published were *Bāla-Bhāgwat*, *Baital-Pachīsī*, Kalidasa's *Meghadūta* in prose and C. Rajagopalachari's *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyana*, Vinoba Bhave's *Gītā Pravachana*, Rabindranath Tagore's *21 Stories*, Jawaharlal Nehru's *Letters from a Father to his Daughter*, Mahatma Gandhi's *My Experiments with Truth* and Maxim Gorki's *Stories and Essays*. A collection of nine essays translated from English was also published. The largest contribution in this direction came from the J and K Cultural Academy,

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Dogri Samstha, Jammu, Shyamlal Sharma and Ramnath Shastri.

Translations of small pieces from diverse sources appeared in the Dogri magazines also. These included stories from Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, Russian, German and Jewish and poems from English, Malayalam and Bengali.

11

Magazines took a long time to come and take root. *Nami Chetana*, which had made its appearance in the last decade and died after four issues, was reborn in 1967-68 and has continued to come out in quarterly issues. Before that, *Rekhā*, a quarterly started by a Jammu journalist in 1963-64, had a short spell of four issues and then stopped publication. But the work done by *Rekhā* was soon taken up by *Shirāzā*, a six-monthly magazine started by J and K Cultural Academy, in 1964. This magazine provided a great fillip to Dogri writing. In 1969, a fortnightly called *Veera Dogrā* was launched from Simla. It was intended to provide a mixed fare of political news and views and articles on Dogra culture, folklore, art and so on. It stopped publication after a few issues. *Phulwari*, a Dogri monthly started and published by the J and K Government Field Survey Organisation, has had better luck. At the end of 1959, only three Dogri magazines were coming out—six-monthly *Shirāzā*, quarterly *Nami Chetana* and monthly *Phulwari*.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Dogri Writing of the Early Seventies

GROWTH of Dogri literature has gone on at a slow and steady pace. Nearly 60 new books have been added to Dogri literature during the first half of 70's. Other significant events during the period have been the first All-India Dogri Writers' Conference at New Delhi, a second Dogri Writers' Conference at Jammu, grant of Sahitya Akademi Awards to Dogri Writers for 1970, 1971, 1972, 1974 and 1975; four major writers of Dogri have passed away—Bhagawat Prasad Sathe, the pioneer of Dogri short story, Bansilal Gupta, the author of the first grammar of Dogri and two posthumous Award Winners, Narendra Khajuria and Shrivatsa Vikal; all the four were creatively active and the last two were very young and full of great promise for the future of Dogri literature. Some new and young writers have entered the field and their work is full of vitality and hope.

2

Of the 23 books of poems published during the last five years, only four are from Himachal—*Dhārān Deeyān Dhuppān* by Shesh Avasthi, *Pathro-re-Māhnu* by Jayadeva Kiran, *Kunjān di Kook*

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by Rikhi Bharadwaj and *Kāvyaadhārā*, a collection of Himachal poetry. The books coming out from Jammu are *Dharen de Āle*, a selection of poems edited by Vishan Das Dubey, *Dogri Kāvya Sushmā*, another selection edited by Shyamlal Sharma, Ramnath Sastri's *Dharati da Rin*, Munshi Ram's *Suche Moti*, Jagannath Kalra's *Kish Kande Kish Kaliyān*, Gogaram Sathi's *Dikkhane aali akkh nayeen*, Narsingh Dev Jamwal's *Koraj*, O.P. Sharma's *Tandān* and *Parataan*, Kishan Samailpuri's *Meriyan Dogri Ghazalān*, Jitendra Udhamपुरi's *Chānani* and *Banjārā*, Ashwini Mangotra's *Khubatiayan*, Santosh Khajuria's *Trichauli*, Pradyumna Singh Jindrahiya's *Phuhaaraan*, Dunichand Tripathi's *Dhaaran te Phuhaaraan*, Kuldip Singh Jindrahi's *Ek Dabari di Maut* and Shivram Deep's two selections, *Koonj Katarān* and *Gunjaar*.

While *Koonj Katarān* attempts to cover the whole spectrum of Dogri poetry and incorporates for the first time poems by lesser known poets like Mehta Mathra Das (1859-1926) and Sagar Palampur, *Gunjaar* brings together representative compositions of 49 new and budding poets and covers a wide geographical area with places like Heeranagar, Bhadrar, Bhagwal, Beerpur, Painthal, Reasi, Ramnagar, Akhnoor, Nagrota, Jindrah, Gurdaspur, Guler, Jagānūn, Kangra, Jyorian, etc. The quality of this new crop is rather poor and no more than a dozen poets of the 49 included reveal any poetic merit and promise for the future.

Phuhaaraan is a collection of songs—actually 44 lyrics and seven bhajans—with notations and with separation from the beloved as their prime theme; they are simple, tuneful, emotionally charged and woven around typically Dogra values and images. Kuldip Singh Jindrahi's range in *Ek Dabari di Maut* is wider and a few of the poems are quite touching. Munshi Ram's verse is mediocre stuff. Gogaram Sathi is an uneducated ex-soldier and his poems are marked by simplicity of expression of a layman's faith, a farmer's joy at harvest and his patriotic feelings and the predicament of a single woman in the village pestered by the Patwari (a village revenue

official) and so on. Duni Chand Tripathi of Ramnagar brings together in his *Dhaaraan te Phuhaaraan* 20 poems, four lyrics and 25 ghazals. There are some very beautiful images like that of the Siyoy Dhaar looking like a lady asleep or the *Tawi: Tauh Tareli dehiya di Jinyan chandi dhaafi sutt di*, sparkling liquid silver (*Siyoy Dhaar*), memories playing havoc in the deep of the mind (*Khaudal*) or sadness settling on the consciousness like dust (*vikal de chete ch*). The ghazals also have some good lines like this:

*Mane de Langāren gi
taaki neen paundi
Bhayen seen akali de
darazi bachare*

(pieces of a broken heart cannot be sewn together, however wise the wise may try.)

The style is simple although there are too many words. Sentiments of self-pity, separation from the beloved and the suffering in the midst of nature's beauty in the hills predominate.

Kish Kande Kish Kaliyan by Jagannath Kalra, contains 26 selected pieces of his verse written over the whole span of his poetic career. Most of it is light funny stuff. Compared to this thin volume, Ramnath Shastri's *Dharati da Rin*, a collection of 79 selected poems written over a period of nearly three decades, is serious stuff. The book brings at one place the result of his poetic effort dealt with in earlier chapters. A few of his recently written poems included here point to a certain withering of inspiration and drying up of the founts of creative imagination noticeable among the earlier poets some of whom like Deenoo Pant and Shambhunath seem to have stopped writing.

Narsingh Dev Jamwal has broken new ground with his *Koraj* and has come far from his earlier experiments in ghazals and poems. It has some very fine poems imbued with modern temper like *Parchol* and *Eh Doās Rāt*. There is

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simplicity of expression of feeling for the one gone and creation of a mood of poignancy with a rare economy of words. In poems like 'Kasak', 'Anjani', 'Leekar' and 'Peeng', the imagery is home-made and fresh but there is excess of it. The poet's love of life and self-confidence and courage are inspiring:

Everyday I create a new couplet,
Life is on the run, fast moving
Where is the time for me,
To look for old crumpled papers
And ferret out memories and forgotten faces
From moth-eaten letters?

And he wishes to be in the thick of life:

Life is in the happenings
Among people;
Even pain is better than loneliness
It is something for company.

Of the new young poets, Santosh Khajuria, Ashwini Mangotra, Jitendra Udhamपुरi and O.P. Sharma Saarathi show great promise. Santosh Khajuria's poems are highly evocative, touching for their innocence and simplicity of sentiment, beautiful in delicately etched images and pleasing in the music of their lines. There is something childlike in the imagination of the poetess for whom sky is a man sitting quietly watching the goings-on below, a wave is like a girl going on its way lost in song and leaves are like some Sanyasis keeping vigil on the buds breaking into flowers and dust-storm is like a wayward playful moody girl :

Kutai akkheen letar
pāyi jandi
Kutai chhappar Kothe
dhāyi jandi
Te andaren baahren
phiriyai
Mitti de poche lāyi
jandi

(throws sand in the eyes of some and topples huts and cottages of others and passing through the house, covers it with dust.)

'Khandarāt' (Ruins of palaces) is a very pretty poem recreating the past with the ingredients of the present—the trees, sparrows, the waterpool. 'Aji Kunnai basaakhi manāyi nayeem' is reminiscent of Padma's 'Raje diyan Mandiyan'—there is in the rhythm of the poem the beat of the Baisakhi drum but wrapped in sadness and the pictures of the Dogra women, who could not celebrate the day due to want, are very touching. Some of her poems like 'Aas', 'Agari', 'Umed', 'Saun', 'Rakhari', 'Holi', 'Jhoothe Laare' are comparatively poor.

Ashwinī Mangotra is good in parts—the poems of *Khub-tiyān* are better than the ghazals and there is a perceptible influence of Madhukar shining through some of them like 'Lalsa'. His style, his sentimentalism, his exuberance all point to this influence. Some of his poems like 'Yad' where clouds of hope and hopelessness strike and break into a thunderstorm, 'Lare' with image of birds hugging light, 'Lalkar' with its movement of lines as of one determined to reach somewhere, 'Men'geet jehra bī ga karana' with its optimism and hope, 'Bajog' and 'Doori' with their nostalgia are good. Mangotra is a promising poet with a sense for words and rhythm, individualistic, full of tension, seeking expression.

Jitendra Udhampuri and O. P. Sharma have both published two books of poetry each. The first book of Jitendra Udhampuri, *Chaanani*, is a long poem dealing with one subject—moonlight. O. P. Sharma's first poetic work is also a long poem dealing with one subject of self-introspection. The second poetic work of each of these is a collection of several poems. But there the similarity ends. Udhampuri is simple and his imagination skims the surface of things, whereas O. P. Sharma is an intellectual par excellence and probes deep into questions. Udhampuri's expression smacks of a certain naivete and plainness, but O. P. Sharma is shrewd and rather complex in his thought processes and expression. One is rural, the other is urban.

Chaanani has some good descriptive passages and a few

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delicately drawn *padas* with emotion pegged on the moonlight. *Banjaara* is a collection of 37 compositions—poems and ghazals with pain of the human heart as their main sentiment and curiously enough one of the most beautiful poems of the collection is on the moon—‘Eh Chann Tunda’. In the midst of memories, anxieties, constraints and fears and hopes, moon is the one alluring and enduring dream—a golden ear-ring or a *chapati* of maize (*dhodda*) hung high on the blue sky beyond reach.

For O.P. Sharma, life is a matter of webs and layers and his ‘Tandaan’ and ‘Partaan’ are attempts to turn and probe the threads and layers of life to find truth. The former is a long poem in blank verse in which the poet grapples with the eternal question of “Who am I”? roving over the philosophical theories of unity of life and walls of separation created by the ego in a taut style. The other book is a collection of 47 poems and eight ghazals—heavy with thought, sharp in questioning and ruthless in scrutinising the human situation and removing masks which stand between appearance and reality. What if the human veins carried gunpowder instead of blood or if they had the fragrance of flowers? He feels he burns because he is lighter than a blade of dry grass. He is not able to accept love because that love is like churned fresh butter while he is the left-over sour buttermilk. He is the target of thoughts who do shooting practice with their guns of hopes and desires in his head. He questions as to where from these crows of moments come. He calls for the end of this world. He sees crosses fixed up all around and all hanging on them. ‘Menh bi bakhala nayeen’ is a beautiful and powerful poem, in which he describes man’s state of helplessness—he feels he is like a lump of sugar in the mouth of Time, dissolving and not knowing:

I have been hearing that somebody

.....

Is seeing everything that happens in his dream

If he was fond of seeing dreams

He should have made me a piece of glass

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Instead of a piece of sugar,
So that He could feel his mouth
And I could escape from dissolving, suffering
And I could feel the tenderness of Time's mouth.

'Chhol', 'Kheer hoaje', 'Din da daaman', 'Sadiyen magari', 'Apana aap', 'O Khubbeya ha' are equally powerful poems in a terse new style and break new ground in the development of Dogri poetry.

3

Dogri short story continues to be vigorous in spite of the death of two of its best creators—Narendra Khajuria and Shrivatsa Vikal. Three of the 14 books of short stories appearing during these five years are selections—*Dogri Kahaniyan* edited by Madan Mohan and published by Sahitya Akademi, *Chonamiyan Dogri Khahaniyan* published by Dogri Samstha and *Shreshtha Dogri Kahaniyan*, Part II, published by the J and K Academy. *Khali Gode* by B. P. Sathe, *Badanami di Chhan* by R. N. Shastri, *Dudh, Lahu te Zahar* by Madan Mohan, *Neenhe de Pathar* by Chanchal Sharma, *Sukka Barud* by O. P. Sharma, *Parshame* by Bandhu Sharma, *Nainh te Pote* by Om Goswami contain some stories which appeared earlier in magazines and which have been mentioned in the last chapter. *Lok gai Lok* by O. P. Sharma, *Hashiye de Notes* and *Nhere da Samundar* by Om Goswami, *Kheerli Boond* by Ashwini Mangotra, *Tapu da Adami* by Chhatrapal and *Reengdi Pir* by Kulbhushan Kayastha contain completely new stories.

About 12 of the 17 stories of *Khali Gode* are new and about half-a-dozen of them—drawn perhaps from his native village—carry the same smell of the soil as did the best of his first collection, *Pehla Phull*. There is nostalgia, there is sentiment, there is the homespun turn of phrase, there are those typical Dogra village names—Geegan, Bhanu, Pyaru,

Rahim Bibi, Kasam, Lakhmi, Shamsdin, Jagatu—there are those simple emotions and problems simply lived and accepted and simply told that are a thing of the past more or less.

Ramnath Shastri's *Badnami di chhan* contains six stories—four of them new. Each story delineates a character that is distinctive and powerful—Uma of 'Hor Keh Kardi'—intelligent, beautiful, sharp and courageous daughter of an avaricious Brahmin, married to a widower; Soma of 'Garajade Badal', a young girl married to a retired old Subedar who can't hold her and curb her freedom, Mohini of 'Pati da Bhaiwal' who was deceived and exploited by her husband's friend; Achala of 'Name Masafar' who can't get happiness with one man or the other, Sita of 'Badnami de Chhan' who stands untouched by scandal of the mohalla and lives without fear and finally Sardar Mangal Singh of 'Triya Akhand Path' who undergoes a sea-change on hearing Gurvani.

Madan Mohan's latest collection of short stories *Dudh, Lahu te Zahar* contains 12 stories. Three of these—'Pathari', 'Meri gali da Pap' and 'O'—have already been discussed in the last chapter. They are among the finest Dogri short stories. So are three of the new nine stories included in the collection—'Kook', 'Maafi' and 'Ek Lamakadi Loth'. Madan Mohan has perfected his medium—the short story—to probe and lay bare the inner psychological workings of the minds of his characters—a recently retired old man on the threshold of freedom from work, dreaming of going to live in the village, caught by the call of money into another job; a complex-ridden husband feeling jealous of his wife and stewing in his own juice; hurt by her popularity and success, an impressionable young girl haunted by dreams of mysterious suicide of a young widowed girl who was like an aunt to her and who lived in her grandfather's house and loved her much when she visited the village and oppressed by the knowledge that it was her own father who took advantage of her innocence and dependence and pushed her to suicide. Madan Mohan has come a long way from his earliest stories of

1950's and developed into a master craftsman of stories of psychological delineation and social commitment.

Chanchal Sharma's *Neenhe de Pathar* contains well-drawn sketches of fragments of small town and rural life seen through a sentimental eye conditioned by superstition and tradition like those of a young beggar woman in a town, going hungry, pricked by lustful eyes, protecting her chastity, clinging to the hope of finding her Ramu who had left her in the village in search of a job in town or of a village girl jilted by her friend from the city when she gets burnt with face disfigured or of a sepoy who returns from war after a lapse of years to find that his beloved has been married off to somebody else; or a husband-wife quarrel in an atmosphere of want and irritation arising out of it; or of a young widow behaving mad and taking somebody, who resembles her dead husband killed on the front, as her husband, believing that a man fighting for his country can never die. There is a certain poignancy and brooding melancholy hovering over most of these stories. The style is crisp. The author has a knack of building up atmosphere and mood.

Om Prakash Sharma, Bandhu Sharma, Om Goswami, Chhatrapal, Ashwini Mangotra and Kulbhushan Chandra Kayastha belong to the younger group of short story writers and each one of them is good in his own way.

Kayastha from Dharamsala is weaker than the others—he is too sentimental. He is pulled by a desire to help in the war effort, is pained by the loss of life in war, by old customs of traditional Dogra society and by faithlessness and exploitation of people. He observes that there is pain in life which creeps like a line and he picks up some points from this line for illumination with his rather naive and sentimental sensibility. Woman is the central character in most of these stories—a woman whom he cherished in college days, who was married to another and whom he now sees as a war-widow; a woman who haunts the bungalow built with the money bequeathed by her for erection of a *sarai*; a woman

who leads the life of a prostitute and attracts him until he learns of her profession and draws back; a woman living away from her husband, working and thinking of separation disturbed by the thought of her son; a woman who commits suicide because her parents are marrying her off to some one who had written to her that he did not want to marry her; a woman who as a girl had been brought up by someone as a younger sister and later used as a mistress; another war-widow who has lost her mind and who comes to the Railway Station in the hope of meeting her husband; a young woman who spurns marriage because the bridegroom's father wants money and leaves home to work as a nurse; and a young bride who charms away the infatuation of a rich-man of the village by calling him 'brother'.

Ashwini Mangotra who is essentially a poet has a keen sense of observation as revealed in his stories 'Andare di Chuppi' and 'Addhiyan Adhuriyan Kahaniyan' and imaginative power of concretising mind's movements as in his stories 'Anjamme giloo di marhi' and 'Lal sari' and an idiomatic style. The stories are about a young girl missing her marriage because her parents cannot give a scooter in dowry, a husband returning home to find his pregnant wife accidentally burnt and dying, a soldier giving his life to save a child dying in a hospital where blood is sold for money and his beneficiaries are not prepared to give blood, a crippled wife seeing the disillusionment of her husband with another woman, a man lying in hospital seized by remorse for his wrong to a woman, a student leader who wants to capitalise at the cost of others and so on. Somehow the stories do not quite click; there is idealism and sentimentalism and the characters and situations are shadowy and look contrived. Stories of *Taapu da Aadami* are nearer life, realistic and gripping. The writer identifies himself so completely with the experiences of his characters that the recreations of their pain and anguish and anxiety become authentic. The writer has full command over the language and his use of words, images and idioms is

superb—it creates an atmosphere and it lays bare the psychological goings-on of the characters. Man in his stories is a helpless creature, prisoner of circumstance or a decision once taken, he withdraws himself as if in a cocoon or on an island and cannot come out. Parma of 'Soonkadiyan Cheehrān', a hotel boy at a wayside hotel on Pattani top in the Jammu hills is the victim of a rape of his wife by three men and she is pregnant and sick and he cannot love her any more. One incident has created a storm in his mind and shattered his stability and his values. The uncle of 'Lalitaditya de Martand' who has lost his former possessions and wealth has also lost his poise and this has affected the life of his wife and their adopted son who senses vaguely the change that has come and is riven by a desire to be of help and his inability to help. Sujan of 'Taapu da Aadami' loses in the election and causes suffering to himself and his family. The husband of 'Toot' gets estranged from his wife on seeing a letter to her and drives her to her death-bed. Jeevanbhai of 'Rishte' cannot give up his party and is hounded from place to place and his family suffers and he suffers. One is inclined to question as to why people do not face reality and live with it. Why do they shrink into themselves thereby causing suffering not only to themselves but also to those who love them? The reluctance to face facts and the clinging to imagined feelings and making too much of failure smack of a certain masochistic self-pity.

Bandhu Sharma is subtle and urbane, a good craftsman in his better stories like 'Parshām' 'Rangali Chiri' and 'Bawa Bhairo'. There is an implicit psychological interest in them, as the state of mind of the old woman Bua is drawn by conflicting pulls of her desire to see her own shawl pawned by her with the Shah's wife and the constraint of social values; the beauty of wonder of a small child who dreams that a colourful bird brings the infant to its mother; the feeling of loss at the disappearance of childhood romance of things; feelings of a temple-musician who has grown old and is required no more

and will not wear any more the temple musician's special apparel; the workings of the mind of a man responsible for the suicide of a girl or of the TB patient whose beloved is getting married to another and so on.

O.P Sharma's stories deal with poor, ordinary people and their problems—changing scene, dislodging people from traditional professions, new civilization encroaching on old values and interests, general selfishness of people illumined by self-sacrifice of a soldier, the horror of war and courage of men who live smilingly even after losing limbs, the cruelty of a wife-beater who beats his wife because she does not bear a child and irony of the situation when he beats to death the foetus in her womb when she has actually conceived, the anxiety of a poor villager for the marriage of his motherless daughter who has come of age, the calamity that befalls a Kashmiri labourer whose foster daughter is buried in a housefall in heavy rain and the callousness of the landlord who took the rent all right but did not repair the roof of the room; the love of a tongawalla for a widow who cannot marry, prevailing sickness and madness and inadequacy, the beauty and innocence of the girl who got drowned and who had been married to an old man, repentance of a bedridden man who ill treated his wife who has left him, pulls of the city for village folk, problems of marriage of a dark-complexioned girl and so on. Om Prakash Sharma also makes effective use of idiomatic Dogri to create atmosphere as in 'Chanukkari-chadar' (atmosphere of a deserted office in drizzle on a dark evening as a backdrop to the pain and predicament of a peon whose wife is seriously ill, brother is disabled and father too old) and to prepare sets as frames to his stories as of autumnal scene for the story of the drowning girl and to draw pure word-pictures as of a day on the *dhakki* of Tawi in his story 'Bher'. What is more refreshing is his realism and eschewal of sentimentalism. Here is a world of happenings with the new impinging on the old creating a conflict of values and consequent suffering.

A similar quality of delineation of rawness of life is found in the stories of Om Goswami. There are contrasting pictures of simple beauty of rural life and the corruption and complexity of city life and the dirt and smouldering stench of colonies which are mixtures of the rural and the urban. And there is a certain incisiveness in his expression and muscle and bone in his terse powerful prose combined with naturalness of flow which make his stories delightful reading. He places before the reader characters and incidents without comment and moralising and this is a characteristic which marks the younger short stories writers from the old. There is social awareness—problems of untouchability and continuing hold of the well-to-do over the poor sections of society ('Raj Parat'), generation gap ('Chhind'), women's awakening to their own power and capacity ('Tiriya chalittar'), adulteration ('Chandragupta Maurya'), poverty and hunger ('Rijak and chor') and marriage ('Mangal chundi').

Behind their social awareness is a tilt towards idealism of the reformer but subdued. He sees the chinks in the social fabric, the new pulls and the old rooted constraints on behaviour. There is at places the influence of Narendra Khajuria discernible in Om Goswami's stories as in the story 'Tiriya chalittar'. But he seems to go beyond. In 'Hashiye de Notes' he has presented new experiments in style and form but the basic approach remains the same—presenting facets of human life in an environment of social pressures and tension and change. These notes are in the nature of moments recollected in tranquillity. Stories of *Nhere da Samundar* are also bits of experience and some characters fished from the ocean of life to highlight social inequalities and evils, superstition and violence, human helplessness and the tensions caused by change of values and styles of life.

In the field of plays, more translations than original works have been published during these five years. *Macbeth* (English) of Shakespere has been translated by Prof. Satya Pal Shastri and published under the same name. *Mrichhakatakam* (Sanskrit) of Shudraka has been translated by Ramnath Shastri and published under the name of *Mitti di gaddi*. Shombu Mitra's *Kanchan Rang* (Bengali) has appeared as *Sunna te Swartha* (translated by Jitendra Sharma). Gorky's *Lower Depths* has been translated by Ramnath Shastri and published as *Patāl-bāsi*. A Gujarati folk-play *Jasma Odan* of Shanta Gandhi has been rendered into Dogri by Kaviratna and published in an issue of the Dogri quarterly *Namichetana*. A Dogri translation of Bhasa's *Doot-Vakya* by Chakradhar Shastri appeared in *Natak Dogri da te kavita Noorpure di* and a translation of Narendra Khajuria's Hindi play *Rasta, Kante Aur Haath* by Kuldeep Singh Jandrahiya has been published under the title *Nhere Raste Chanan Hoya*. Two collections of one-act plays have also come out—one entitled *Dogri Ekanki* has been brought out by the J and K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages and another called *Pekhan* has appeared from Himachal. Madan Mohan Sharma, the well-known Dogri short story writer has published a collection of Radio One-Act plays under the title *Ek Janam Hor*. Om Goswami carries forward the work done by Narendra Khajuria in *Asa Bhāg Jagāne Āle Aan* by adding a book of seven one-act plays for children—*Dogri Bal Ekanki*. Only two full-length plays have come out during this period—*Janaur* by Madan Mohan Sharma and *Mandalik* by Narsingh Dev Jamwal.

Mandalik is a mythological play in the sense that its subject-matter is a popular Dogri ballad about a legendary figure Bir Gugga also called Raja Mandalik. Gugga Navami is a festival celebrated all over Duggar on the day following Krishna Janmashtami and the story dramatised by Jamwal in *Mandalik* runs like this : Raja Dev of Dudh-nera has two

wives Vashala and Kashala, both sisters with no issue. Vashala the elder is noble-minded, openhearted, devoted and given to prayers while Kashala is sly and given to deception and duplicity. The latter manages to get from Guru Gorakhnath the fruit of her sister's prayers for a son by deception. Vashala is cheated and heart-broken. The Guru consoles her and tells her that Providence had no son in store for her but seeing her intense devotion and desire for a son, he approaches the gods and goddesses and gets from them a boon to bless Vashala with a son who would live for 18 years. This son when born is Gugga. Kashala gives birth to two sons who turn out to be imbecile and dull-witted. Vasak Nag is jealous of Gugga and wants to destroy him because he has been told that Gugga would wreck his clan. He tries to destroy Gugga but Gorakhnath protects him. Gugga or Mandalik grows into a handsome youth and marries the beautiful princess, Sirgala, of Gaur Bangala. While he is away from his own kingdom with his wife, enjoying conjugal bliss, the King of Ghazni attacks his kingdom and takes away the wealth of the kingdom and the favourite cow Kapala and his father dies. Mandalik is unaware of these developments as Sirgala does not allow any news to reach him. Tulsu, the maid of Vashala, comes in disguise and apprises him of the developments. He returns posthaste along with Sirgala and before entering his kingdom goes to Ghazni and brings back the looted treasure and the cow. Just then he is 18 and dies with a sudden fit of heart-attack.

The characters in the play are shadowy, including the main character Mandalik. The elements of true drama are hardly there. It is just a dramatisation of a folk-tale with Pyuli, the Pandit, and Kakori, the protege of Vasak, trying to raise some laughter, and Sirgala inspiring some pseudo-romantic atmosphere, with lot of domestic sentiment like mother's love for son, jealousies of co-wives, rivalries of two dynasties and rituals thrown in.

Janaur is a social psychological play which deals with the

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uncovering of emptiness, frustration and unsatiated lust of a crippled old man. The central character of the play, an army captain, has lost his legs in World War II and is crippled. He has brought up an orphan girl Gita from the age of two as his daughter and she is now a full-bloomed young girl who has fallen in love with a young boy Anil and wants to marry him. The crippled old man cannot bear to see her leave him and thinks of committing suicide. The play opens with this situation and the first Act shows him babbling under the influence of drink comparing Gita to Helen and Urvashi and enumerating her physical assets and he decides to keep her by arranging her marriage with his servant, a village domestic, on the condition that he will not touch her while he (the captain) lives. But, as the play progresses, his friend Radhey Shyam who had brought the girl to him condemns his idea, the servant himself withdraws and the boy turns out to be the son of captain's one-time fiancée who refused to marry him when he returned from war with his legs gone, and married another man and was later widowed and getting no support to his fantastic scheme from any quarter, he shoots himself after bequeathing half of his property to the servant and half to Gita and giving her freedom to marry according to her own choice. There is a long-winded dialogue between the captain and Radhey Shyam who talks on and on, on the political situation in the country which does not seem to contribute to the movement of the play unless it is to be taken as a relief from the tension created by the hysterical babblings of the Captain in the first Act giving vent to his unsatiated suppressed lust and his fantastic scheme to keep Gita by his side. There is expounding of the Captain's idea of squeezing pleasure out of every minute of one's life and his pathetic condition where he is denied the fulfilment of his desire. His final collapse between the pulls and prospect of unfulfilment of his desire and the all round condemnation of his stand to keep Gita is really pathetic.

There was no activity in the field of Dogri novel for nearly a decade after the publication of three novelettes in early 60's. Appearance of the late Shrivatsa Vikal's *Phull Bina Dali* in 1970 was a very welcome development. This has been followed by appearance of two more novels in 1972—Pishorilal Gupta's *Jiss Aillai Nhera Pei geya* (Raman Prakashan, Batota) and *Bad-Sees* by Kumari Shakuntala Sharma Birpuri (Ram Prakashan, Birpur).

Pishorilal's novel has a very simple plot and a few characters and situations and narrates in first person the author's observation of Dogra society in the hills—the heartlessness and also compassion which flows at the lightest tug at the heart. Shyamu, a Dogra sepoy, returns after a long absence away from home to see his mother die as soon as he sets foot in his home. She had waited for him for so long and now when he comes home, she dies. Shyamu sees the torture of a daughter-in-law (his friend Ramu's wife) Basaintu at the hands of her mother-in-law: she is locked up in a room, semi-starved, not allowed to meet her husband and not permitted to speak or cry. He sees the waywardness of relationship between the village Pandit's son and his mistress Isshari whose demands for tinsel like bangles and collyrium he is unable to fulfil. He falls in love with a girl but she is sold away to another. While there is nothing much to write home about plot or character development, the language of the novel is full of charm.

Phull Bina Dali has a larger canvas, a typical cross-section of Dogra lower middle class society with its overburden of traditional orthodox value system and evolution of some new values under the weight of convention and tradition. Soma is the central character and she embodies in herself the seed of change. The novel shows the sprouting of that seed. It begins with introduction of Soma as a young Dogra girl of 17 who has lost her mother at the age of 15 and

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has passed matriculation in first class and being the eldest child, looks after the household and the needs of her father and two younger brothers and a sister and it ends with her death in child-birth. In between she is proposed to be engaged to one Ramesh who starts looking at her as a mother because of his own mother's taunting reference to her and who helps her from time to time; she is married to one Brij who dies of a sudden illness but before dying, releases her from the bond of marriage and tells her to remarry after his death; then she takes up the job of a teacher and later remarries one Swadesh, a school teacher like her, who nurses her during her illness and falls in love with her. Soma's character and the hostile environment which she ultimately overcomes and wins over are reminiscent of Saratchandra Chattopadhyaya's novels. Soma is an idealised character—full of goodness and beauty, deeply rooted in the local traditions of the soil, self-sacrificing and self-effacing and devoted to the service of those with whom she is related, even her in-laws whom she helps with her self-earned money. The author has created her as a vehicle of his reformist approach to the problem of widow remarriage and as an illustration of the Dogri saying '*Jinden gi dāngān to Moyen gi Bāngān*'. Soma blazes a new trail and sets an example by remarrying in a backward orthodox community where remarriage of a widow was unthinkable till a few years ago. Ramesh makes Soma an Arya Samajist by replacing the picture of Krishna in her room by that of Swami Dayananda because Arya Samaj permitted widow-marriage which orthodox Hinduism did not, although at heart Soma remains a Krishna-Bhakta and as ritualistic as ever.

Shakuntala Sharma's novel attempts to probe the problem of relationship and marriage and shows Dogra woman even more liberated than Soma of *Phull Bina Dali*. The central character of this novel, Shakun, does not marry after she is jilted by her first love, her tutor, and takes up a career and lives independently. There are different facets of relationships forming the warp and woof of the novel—relationship between

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Shakun, the central character, and the narrator and Ved, her teacher, who professed to love her but who later married a better-looking and richer girl Satish, relationship between Ved and his wife Satish and Ved's unhappiness, relationship between Shakun and Lalit who calls her sister, relationship between Janaki, Lalit's mother, and Lalit's father whom she has left for another man, relationship between Janaki and her lover and second husband Sain. Shakun does not marry and pursues a career as a doctor but seems to continue to cherish love for Ved. Janaki leaves her husband and starts living with another man whom she perhaps loves. She loves her son also but he cannot forgive her for deserting his father. She is not happy in having alienated her son. Ved is not happy in having refused the call of his heart and having married for considerations other than love. Structurally the novel is not quite smooth but, in its theme, it is more realistic, more down to earth and contemporary.

6.

There has been a lot of writing of Dogri prose lately as evident from the issues of *Nami Chetana* and *Shiraza* and *Sārhā Sahitya* and *Phulwari*. In book form, however, only seven books have come out during 1970-74. (1) *Rajat Jayanti Granth*—a collection of articles on different aspects of Dogra life, art, literature, language, history, etc., published by Dogri Samstha in 1970 on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Samstha; (2) *Chubbhan te Haasse*—an anthology which contains a few essays of wit and humour in Dogri; (3) *Kashmir Darpan* by Dr Ved Kumari; and (4) *Bawa Jitto* by Prof. Ramnath Shastri, two collections of essays of research into the Sanskrit heritage of Kashmir and the historicity and literary merits of the folk ballad on Bawa Jitto respectively; (5) *Najar Apani Apani*—a collection of eight essays of literary criticism by Chanchal Sharma, essays dealing with

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three Dogri novels, stories of Madan Mohan and O.P. Sharma and the poetry of Charan Singh and Almast are praiseworthy attempts in the direction of critical appreciation of contemporary writers; (6) *Boorai de Laddu* by Dr Sansarchandra—a collection of 12 essays of wit and humour; and (7) *Shri Vatsa Samārika*—a collection of articles on Vikal as a man, a poet, a novelist, a short story writer, etc. It also contains some poems on him.

7

Translation work in Dogri has not been neglected. Besides the plays mentioned earlier, other works translated into Dogri and published are (1) *Hitopadeśa* from Sanskrit, (2) Gorki's stories and memoirs from English, (3) Novel *Mriganayani* from Hindi, (4) *Sāmānya Bhasha Vigyan* from Hindi, (5) & (6) *Shrimad Bhagawad Gītā* from Sanskrit—one by Shreshtha Pathania and another by Chakradhar Shastri and (7) to (10) Upanishads in four thin volumes from Sanskrit, one of *Kathopanishad*, one of *Kenopanishad*, one of *Taittiriyo-panishad* and three, i.e., *Aitareya*, *Praśna* and *Isāvāsya*, in one volume called *Trai Upanishad*. These Upanishads containing both the original Sanskrit and Dogri translation have been edited by Prof. Ramnath Sastri and published by Dharamartha Trust, Jammu.

CHAPTER EIGHT

In Retrospect

DOGRI literature in the middle of 1970's is at a crucial stage in its development. There are factors favourable for its growth and there are also certain inhibiting factors. There is a sense of achievement and fulfilment and hope. There is also a feeling of frustration and inadequacy and disappointment.

There is no doubt that the climate for growth of Dogri literature is propitious today. There has been a gradual thawing of the attitude of general apathy towards Dogri and more and more people are now taking interest in their mother-tongue. There has been a substantial increase in the number of writers and readers during the last decade, and the area of literary activity has spread to not only smaller towns in Jammu but also to Himachal Pradesh and Delhi. Institutions like the Jammu and Kashmir Cultural Academy, Dogri Research Institute, Jammu, Dogra Mandal and Dogri Samstha have done yeoman service for the cause of Dogri. New institutions like the Academy in Himachal Pradesh, Dogra Himachal Sanskriti Sangam, Delhi, and the growing number of individuals interested in development of Dogri literature are expected to make further contributions to it. In the first thirty-five years of this century, only two Dogri books were

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written—*Dogri Bhajanmala*, a collection of devotional songs by Pandit Hardutt Shastri and *Shrimad Bhagawad Gītā*, a Dogri prose translation of the *Gītā* by Prof. Gauri Shankar. The next 35 years saw the publication of 173 volumes in Dogri. The last five years have added nearly 100 publications including periodicals. Examinations for proficiency in Dogri conducted by the J and K University are becoming more popular. Research in Dogri language and allied Pahari dialects are being encouraged by the Universities of Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Himachal and Kurukshetra. Another Dogri journal, *Ambar*, has started coming out from Jammu. Two Hindi journals published by the Public Relations Department of the Himachal Pradesh Government and the Himachal Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, i.e., *Himaprastha* and *Samasi* respectively, also gives coverage to activities in the language and literature of the region.

What worries the Dogri writer most today, however, is the woefully small number of writers and readers in Dogri. Duggar is a backward region with a high incidence of illiteracy. Dogri has still not been introduced as a medium of instruction in schools upto the higher secondary stage. There are no text-books, no books for neo-literates or adults, hardly any books for children (except two books of Narendra Khajuria and one by Om Goswami), no daily newspaper in Dogri, no monthly magazine in Dogri. Although a grammar of Dogri in Hindi is available, there is no dictionary; the J and K Cultural Academy has commissioned the preparation of one and it is expected to be published shortly. Then, there is a very large number of educated Dogras who are just not interested in their mother-tongue and there are many among them who do not consider Dogri fit enough for writing and good enough for reading. Introduction of Dogri as the medium of instruction in schools and launching of programmes of adult education with specially designed Dogri books for the purpose are two ways by which the number of readers of Dogri can be increased. Those who study through

the medium of Dogri will naturally demand books in Dogri and once there is a large number of readers, books and journals for them will get written.

Duggar has about 35 dialects of which Dogri and Kangri are two major dialects and they have very close affinities and a very large area of common characteristics. Both have been used for the purposes of literature—Dogri of Jammu more than Kangri. In 1940's a gentleman attempted a Bhadrawāhi translation of the *Gītā* but nothing further has happened in that dialect. Specimens of old writing are available in Chameali. People have started writing in other dialects also although the writing is limited to verse compositions for the present. Dogri has been recognised on the premise that it is a language spoken by nearly 50 lakhs of people of Jammu and Himachal Pradesh. There is, therefore, need for an integrated and rational approach to the problem of language. The first step in this direction appears to be to prepare a dialectological map of the entire Dogra region and collection of specimens of the spoken dialects on a scientific basis and then approach the problem by emphasizing similarities, common characteristics and common vocabulary. It is necessary to guard against tendencies to think of one dialect as better than the others or completely exclusive of and different from others. The first All-India Dogri Writers' Conference recognised the diversity of dialects spoken in the region and passed a resolution to the effect that 'the process of synthesis and integration of these dialects should be gradual and natural and while efforts should continue to evolve greater standardisation in spelling and pronunciation, full scope should be given to all local variations. In some quarters some controversy about nomenclature of the language spoken in Dogra region has arisen so that the language spoken in the Dogra region of Jammu and Kashmir State is called 'Dogri' and the language spoken by Dogras of Himachal is called 'Pahari'. The conference wished that growth of Dogri-Pahari language should not be inhibited by political, emotional and

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semantic controversies and whether the people of the region call their mother-tongue Dogri or Pahari or by any other name, should not come in the way of the fullest growth and enrichment of their language. Language is a living and growing thing and it will be interesting to watch the shaping of this old language which was mainly a thing of the spoken word, spoken differently from place to place with local variations, into a language of the written word out of an amalgam of 35 different elements with a common cultural lineage and social and historical background.

It cannot be said at this stage as to what shape and form Dogri will ultimately take. Besides Jammu, other centres of literary activity in J and K State and Himachal Pradesh will emerge and each centre may develop special linguistic features of its own and its own brand of Dogri or Pahari. There are precedents of this sort of situation as in the case of Malayalam which has had three centres of literary activity or Kannada which has also had more than one centre.

Dogri literature proper is barely three decades old, although evidence of spasmodic literary activity in Dogri can be traced back to the second half of 18th century when Dattu graced the court of Maharaja Ranjitdeo of Jammu. Kashmiri literature is older by five centuries and yet Dogri literature is not inferior to Kashmiri literature in quantity or quality and some of the best in Dogri can compare well with the best in other Indian languages which had a lead of nearly five centuries over Dogri. Age is not necessarily a sign of the maturity and respectability and vitality of a literature.

Most Indian language literatures drew inspiration and themes from Indian epics like *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* and Hindu mythology; devotional songs and local legends formed an important element of their early compositions and later the impact of English literature played a vital role in their development and modernisation. Dogri started with folk themes and translations from the *Gītā*, *Durgā Saptasatī* and Bhartrihari and subjects of *Rāmāyaṇa* and popular Vedānta.

HISTORY OF DOGRI LITERATURE

Dogri writers of the earlier period were well-read in Sanskrit, Hindi and Urdu literatures and their own writing was influenced and conditioned by this fact. This accounts for the preponderance of translations from Sanskrit and Hindi, modelling on Hindi and Urdu literary forms and the emergence of Dogri ghazal.

Certain organisations and individuals have played an important role in the development of literatures of Indian languages like Sahiti Samiti in the case of Telugu, Mama Warerkar for Marathi, Bankim Chandra Chatterji and Rabindranath Tagore for Bengali, Pancha-Sakha, the five friends (Balaram Das and others) in Oriya, and Agarwal, Bezbarua, Goswami and Gohai Barua in the case of Assamese. For Dogri the significant role in the development of Dogri literature has been played by Dogri Samstha and its more active members like Ramnath Shastri.

State Cultural Academies, State Governments and universities have helped a lot in the development of Indian languages like Punjabi, Marathi, Tamil and Gujarati. The J and K Cultural Academy has helped the development of Dogri literature very much by its publication programme and by granting subsidies and awards to writers. The Cultural Academies of Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh and the Universities of Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh are expected to help the growth and development of writing in the mother-tongue of the region further. The education departments of the two States could help the development of the language still more by introducing mother-tongue as the medium of instruction up to higher secondary stage, by getting text-books in the mother-tongue prepared and by encouraging purchase of Dogri publications by libraries of educational institutions in the States.

What does Dogri bring to the Indian language literary scene? Not much perhaps. Its rich folk literature, some beautiful and emotionally charged poetry, some remarkable short stories of social commitment, some essays and a few plays.

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and novels. The folk literature is a rich treasure house of the life of the community in songs and ballads, in folk-tales and sayings and idioms. The songs particularly are full of music and uninhibited pouring of the heart. The written literature is very meagre and one may not find much literary merit in it. But there is a genuine attempt of an Indian Community to discover itself, wonder at the beauty of the land and the mother-tongue, pain and protest against the poverty and hunger and backwardness and ignorance of the people, inequity and exploitation of the feudal social structure and the growing awareness of the creeping social change.

Although there are more than 100 persons writing poetry today, the work of only about 20 is significant and the best work of nearly 10 of these possesses high literary merit. Poetry cannot be translated satisfactorily. The word-music and charm of songs of Parmanand Almast, Yash Sharma and Kishan Samailpuri cannot be conveyed in another language but Dogras who have heard and read their songs have found great beauty in them. Ved Deep is a master of the Dogri ghazal and some of his best ghazals have a strange haunting melancholy and wistfulness of love long lost. The best poems of Ramnath Shastri, Ved Deep, Kehari Singh Madhukar, Padma, Mohanlal Sapolia, Narsingh Dev Jamwal, O. P. Sharma, Santosh Khajuria and the late Charan Singh have certain enduring qualities and can compare favourably with the best poetry in other Indian languages. Preoccupation with form, absence of critical appreciation and the requirements of an appreciative and critical audience have been the main weaknesses of the bulk of Dogri poetry till today. Dogri poetry in general has yet to go beyond the Kavi-Sammelan stage, outgrow the weaknesses mentioned above, eschew sentimentalism and slogan-mongering and acquire a certain intellectual maturity. It is necessary that enlightened criticism in writing replaces the uncritical appreciation usually abundant in Kavi Sammelans and the poets themselves write from a deep inner compulsion and not to please an audience.

HISTORY OF DOGRI LITERATURE

Dogri short story has made tremendous progress; from B. P. Sathe's 'Pehla phull' and Lalita Mehta's 'Sui dhāgā' to the best stories of Madan Mohan Sharma, Naredra Khajuria and Ved Rahi and now Om Prakash Sharma, Bandu Sharma, Chhatrapāl and Om Goswami, it is a long leap. Sathe's stories are very close to the folk-tale tradition and Lalitha Mehta's stories are rather sentimental improvised stuff. But the best work of Ved Rahi, Madan Mohan Sharma, Narendra Khajuria, Om Goswami, Chhatrapāl, and O. P. Sharma is marked by qualities of craftsmanship, greater social awareness, a more serious tone, greater psychological insight and a more skilful use of the nuances of Dogri language to create a mood, an atmosphere or a character or to delineate a situation or social problem. The few novels available are fairly satisfactory attempts at description of life and problems of Dogra life. The feudal social structure of Dogra society and the winds of change that started sweeping these backwaters of society after independence have been sensitively portrayed and the main characters of these novels have been very tenderly, though idealistically, delineated and the plots, though thin, help in fulfilling the objectives of the writers.

The field of Dogri fiction so far has been very limited—largely rural Duggar with its social problems. There are vast chunks of social life and problems peculiar to Duggar awaiting to be tackled. The few experiments in theme, style and form seen lately are still a far cry from the new experiments being made in the genre in more advanced literatures.

Dogri plays written so far are rather amateurish, half-baked stuff. *Bawa Jitto* and *Sarpanch* are idealised dramatic representations of Dogra heroes of a feudalistic Dogra past, Bawa Jitto and Data Ranu, both martyrs to the cause of social justice. The plots of these, as also of *Mandalik*, are too thin; there is surfeit of sentimentalism and dramatic elements are limited. *Nama Gran*, *Dehri* and *Dhārān de athru* are plays of social purpose, with an aim and are not very satisfying. Dogra one-act plays are better. Play-writing is a difficult

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thing and Dogri stage is still very backward. There are few good examples. It will take some time before Dogri produces really good plays which may also be equally good literature.

The importance of prose in the development of a language and its literature was realised by Dogri writers late. There are very few books of essays available so far although a number of persons have written articles on Dogri language, Dogri culture, Dogri art and sculpture and historical and research subjects. Shyamlal Sharma has written extensively on Dogri language and Kedarnath Shastri, Sansar Chand and Vidya Ratan Khajuria on historical monuments and Dogri art and painting. It would be worthwhile if each of these writers and also writers like Govardhan Singh who contributed an article on Dogra history and Dr Ved Kumari, who is a research scholar and has examined the problems of research in the field of Dogri language and culture, write more extensively on subjects of their specialisation in Dogri language. That would be a real contribution to the growth of Dogri prose. Teachers of various subjects could similarly write interesting books in Dogri on the subjects that they teach. Work done by Shakti Sharma, Vishwanath Khajuria and Laksminarayan needs to be carried forward and stray elementary attempts in literary appreciation require to be intensified to develop a systematic integrated approach to assessment of Dogri literature and development of principles of literary criticism.

Journalistic writing is an important contributory factor in the development of prose of a language. Unfortunately there has been very limited journalistic activity in Dogri so far. All other languages have not only several monthlies and weeklies but also daily papers. It is hoped that during this decade there will be increase in the number of Dogri journals.

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